

Halfway Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	107046
Local Authority	Sheffield
Inspection number	336792
Inspection dates	4–5 March 2010
Reporting inspector	Georgiana Sale

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	185
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Chris Stocks
Headteacher	Mrs Kathy Vince
Date of previous school inspection	2 May 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 16 lessons and observed seven staff teach. They held meetings with governors, staff and groups of pupils and talked with some parents and carers. They observed the school's work and looked at documentation including records of pupils' progress, the school improvement plan, assessment information, policies and samples of pupils' work. Information about safeguarding was evaluated. Inspectors also took into account the views of staff and pupils expressed in questionnaires and analysed 117 questionnaires from parents and carers.

- the effectiveness of leadership across the school and how it is driving improvement
- the standards of attainment and the rates of progress of all groups of pupils
- the monitoring of pupils' performance and whether action is taken if underachievement is identified.

Information about the school

This is an average size primary school serving a suburb of Sheffield. Almost all pupils come from White British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well below average. The proportion of those with special educational needs and/or disabilities is broadly average.

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

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

4

The school's 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 improvement.

Although attainment is broadly in line with the national average, examination results have declined since 2007 in both mathematics and science. There has also been a sharp fall in the rate of progress made by pupils during this time. The most recent examination results at Key Stage 2 show that not all pupils make the progress they should in all subjects. The quality of teaching is inadequate and limits significantly the pace at which pupils learn. Teachers' expectations of pupils are too low. This, together with weak planning, leads to lessons that lack sufficient challenge. Provision for literacy and numeracy is not planned or delivered well enough and consequently pupils' language and mathematical development is stifled. The school does not give suitable academic support to its most potentially vulnerable pupils, including those identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities with the result that they too make inadequate progress.

The quality of care and guidance is good. Support for pupils' well-being is strong and securely embedded across the school. This is evident in the positive relationships in lessons and pupils' attendance rates, which are above average. Pupils enjoy school and behave well in and out of lessons. They say they feel safe and that incidents of bullying are quickly and effectively dealt with.

Leaders and managers have been too generous in evaluating most aspects of the school's work and improvement plans lack clarity and a sense of urgency. The monitoring of teaching and learning has not been effective, resulting in the sharp fall in pupils' attainment and progress. Teachers' use of information about pupils' abilities to help plan challenging lessons, set appropriate targets and provide better guidance on how pupils can improve their work were highlighted at the last inspection. Since then, too little progress has been made in dealing with these weaknesses. This, combined with the school's inaccurate view of its effectiveness, means the school is unable to demonstrate the necessary capacity to secure sustained improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Focus all leaders on accelerating progress by:

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- setting ambitious targets and making sure that all staff have high expectations of all pupils
- using the outcomes of accurate self-evaluation to highlight priorities and produce focused plans which are regularly monitored and evaluated.
- Improve the quality of teaching and learning by:
 - enabling teachers to recognise National Curriculum levels in core subjects and use these levels to help plan challenging lessons
 - ensuring that all teachers use assessment data about pupils when planning lessons to match pupils' learning needs.
- Increase the rate of pupils' progress so that attainment is raised, particularly in the core subjects by ensuring that teachers:
 - monitor pupils' progress more closely in lessons and take quick and effective action where there is underachievement
 - provide pupils with clear feedback so they know exactly what to do to improve.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**4**

Pupils behave well in lessons; they are thoughtful, tolerant and treat each other with respect. They have positive attitudes to learning and are able to work collaboratively as well as independently. Pupils arrive at the school with above average attainment overall. They make slow progress in lessons because of the lack of challenge compounded by teaching that fails to match their abilities. By the time pupils leave, their attainment has fallen to broadly average when compared nationally. This represents inadequate progress. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities also make slow progress because, although they are cared for emotionally and socially, support packages for their learning are disjointed and information is not always shared or acted upon.

Pupils told inspectors that they are happy and enjoy school. Attendance is above average. Pupils have a strong sense of right and wrong. They eat healthily and most take advantage of the opportunities to enjoy out-of-school physical exercise. Pupils say their voice is heard and acted upon, enabling them to play an active part in their own school community, for example, through 'The Green Team'. They also benefit from a wider role locally through links with the police, local churches and universities.

Pupils enjoy taking part in events to help them appreciate other cultures, for example visits from several local minority ethnic groups to talk about their homeland. They also spoke about how much they enjoy their fundraising activities either to help Fair Trade communities or to buy operating gowns for children in India. Pupils take care of each other outside the classroom through, for example, 'playground friends'.

Pupils' low-level skills in literacy and numeracy, combined with their slow progress over time, means that they are not adequately prepared for the next stage of education or the world of work.

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These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	4
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	4
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	4
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	4
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

There are positive relationships in the classroom as a result pupils have good attitudes and behave well. However, the quality of teaching is inadequate. In too many classes the work does not meet pupils' differing needs because teachers do not use information about pupils to plan appropriate activities. Teachers' expectations of what pupils are capable of are not high enough and fail to ensure that they all make at least satisfactory progress. During lessons there is too much undemanding questioning which prevents pupils learning at a brisk enough pace. Pupils spoke of the amount of repetition of previous work they do in class. The accuracy of teachers' assessments is too variable and the feedback given to pupils is not specific or consistent enough across all subject areas to ensure that all of them know exactly how well they are doing or how to improve.

The curriculum has strengths in the provision of extra-curricular and enrichment activities, which supports pupils' good cultural development. However, opportunities are missed to make the most of these activities and many are 'one-off' events, or not followed up in the main curriculum. There is little difference in the curriculum offered to

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

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pupils, even those in mixed-aged classes. The curriculum lacks challenge and is not planned well enough to meet the various needs and interests of pupils.

The school provides good care and support for all pupils to make them feel safe and protected. Good work is done in school and in partnership with other professionals to give timely, targeted support when necessary for behavioural, medical and social problems. The school works well with parents and carers, and children new to the school, and provides good support to ensure a smooth transition to secondary school.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	4
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	4
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	4
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The school does much to create a climate where pupils are happy and attend school regularly. However, leaders and managers are not effective in their drive to secure improvement or to ensure high-quality teaching and learning. Information about the school's performance has not been evaluated well enough to plan strategically or provide a sense of urgency to address the decline in achievement seen since the last inspection. Challenging targets have only recently been agreed. Systems to monitor teaching and learning and pupils' progress are in their infancy and as yet have had little impact on driving improvement. Self-evaluation and accountability have not been sufficiently robust.

The school has good relationships with parents and carers, who were complimentary about the warm and welcoming atmosphere. They enjoy the frequent opportunities to talk to staff and observe lessons and special assemblies. The governing body has begun to provide greater challenge to senior leaders. Most governors understand the strengths and weakness the school faces and are supporting the school by setting appropriate priorities for improvement. The governing body has ensured that, at the time of the inspection, safeguarding procedures met all statutory requirements.

Positive relationships are promoted in and around the school and its immediate community. The school has created a safe, caring and harmonious atmosphere. However, it fails to ensure that all groups of pupils make the necessary gains in learning. The school therefore is not effective in its promotion of equal opportunities. Pupils have a developing awareness of global issues but have a limited understanding of cultural and ethnic diversity in the United Kingdom.

These are the grades for leadership and management

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The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	4
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	4
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	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	4
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	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 very large majority of parents and carers of pupils at the school said that they felt the school kept their children safe, that their children enjoyed school and that they were pleased with the school overall. They thought the teaching was good and that the school catered for their children's needs. Inspectors agreed with the small number of concerns that were raised about pupils' lack of progress, especially in mathematics.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Halfway Junior School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 117 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 185 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	0	0	1	100	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	0	0	1	100	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	0	0	1	100	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	0	0	1	100	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	0	0	1	100	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	0	0	1	100	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	0	0	1	100	0	0	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	0	0	1	100	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	0	0	1	100	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	0	0	1	100	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	0	0	1	100	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	0	0	1	100	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	0	0	1	100	0	0	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
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.

Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
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.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
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.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



5 March 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Halfway Junior School, Sheffield, S20 4TA

We really enjoyed visiting your school recently and I am writing to thank you for two very interesting days. Your thoughts and views helped us to make the following judgements during our inspection.

- Most of you work hard in lessons.
- Your behaviour is good and you are kind to each other and work and play together very happily.
- You enjoy your lessons and most of the tasks you are asked to do.
- You are well cared for by all the adults in the school.

We also found that your school has some weaknesses and needs to improve quickly. We have judged that the school is made subject to 'special measures'. This means it will receive extra support and inspectors will return to check that it is making the necessary improvements. The most important things we have asked school leaders and staff to do are listed below:

- make sure that teachers and other adults expect the best from you all, carefully check your learning and progress, and set you challenging targets,
- plan the right work for each of you and help anyone who is falling behind to catch up quickly,
- give you feedback so that you know exactly what to do to improve your work,
- make sure that all teachers are clear about what they have to do so that you make good progress in every subject.

You all have a very important part to play in improving your school. You can help by attending school every day, working hard and always trying your best.

Yours sincerely

Georgiana Sale

Lead Inspector

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