

Short Heath Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	104188
Local Authority	Walsall
Inspection number	355539
Inspection dates	30 June –1 July 2010
Reporting inspector	Linda Rockey

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	223
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Leslie Foster
Headteacher	Cathy Draper
Date of previous school inspection	27 February 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two additional inspectors. They observed 12 lessons led by 13 different teachers. All classes were visited at least once. In addition, they observed two sessions designed to prepare Year 2 pupils for Year 3 in September. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a wide range of documentation, including the school's self-evaluation form, the school development plan, external reports and assessment information. They looked at pupils' books and met with groups of parents and carers, the school council, governors and members of the Short Heath Federation. The school's safeguarding policy and practice were also scrutinised. Inspectors analysed questionnaires from 80 parents and carers, and looked at responses from 25 staff and 208 pupils.

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

- the effectiveness of the school's plans to raise attainment and increase pupils' rates of progress, particularly in mathematics
- how successful shared leadership is in securing improvement
- how well pupils use their basic skills in all subject areas.

Information about the school

This school is one of three schools in the Short Heath Federation, which is led by an executive headteacher. She was appointed in April 2010, but held the interim post from September 2009. Short Heath Junior School has an acting head of school. A new appointment has been made for the start of the new academic year. The head of school designate was in school for the two inspection days. Most pupils are White British with a small number from minority ethnic backgrounds. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is below the national average. At the time of the inspection, most Year 6 pupils were visiting their next school as part of the local authority's transition arrangements.

The school has gained several awards, and recently achieved Dyslexia Friendly status.

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?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

This satisfactory school provides a happy, caring environment where 'Every day, in every way, everyone matters'. Pupils told inspectors that they enjoy school and feel safe, and so their attendance is good. Behaviour is good in lessons, assemblies, around school and in the playground, and exclusions are rare. However, procedures to ensure the school does not exclude pupils for lengthy periods of time are not good enough, and senior leaders and governors are not sufficiently clear about the relevant statutory requirements. On this matter, the school has recently taken inappropriate advice from the local authority with regard to procedures it should adopt for any pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities who may display challenging behaviour.

The inspection coincided with the local authority's transition arrangements. This provided inspectors with an opportunity to observe the school's approach to supporting pupils as they prepare to start Year 3. Partnership with parents is good and some of the caring arrangements for welcoming new pupils are exemplary. Year 2 pupils, all from Rosedale Infant School, were settled quickly and provided with attractive and informative 'passports' into the school. Staff patiently explained the routines and provided a safe environment for them to play and tour the building. Older pupils impressed inspectors with their care and concern for these Year 2 pupils.

Pupils' attainment has been low historically but the school's most recent data show that standards have risen to broadly average. The school's data for the end of Year 6 national assessments demonstrate that standards have improved significantly this year, although not as quickly in mathematics as in English and science. Overall, pupils' progress is satisfactory and most groups of pupils learn at a similar rate, including those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. However, the quality of learning varies between classes and, on occasion, some pupils are not challenged sufficiently and not all pupils know their targets or are able to identify the next steps in their learning.

The federation leadership team have focused on ways to improve the quality and consistency of teaching. There has been increased accountability and regular monitoring of classroom practice. As a result, teaching has improved and it is clear that pupils are doing better. There is not yet enough effective teaching to ensure good rates of progress for all pupils. Middle leaders are enthusiastic and committed to securing improvement in the school and across the federation, but lack experience and have not yet developed a sufficiently strategic overview. They are working hard but not always evaluating the impact of the various initiatives. The school's self-evaluation is mainly accurate and the capacity for sustained improvement is satisfactory. The federation leadership team have a sound grasp of what needs to be done and have made a start on resolving the weaknesses identified.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment in English, mathematics and science, and especially in mathematics, by:
 - raising the standard of teaching to good or better in every class
 - ensuring all activities are carefully matched to pupils' needs
 - providing all pupils with detailed feedback on how to improve their work.
- Work closely with the governing body and local authority to establish clarity about statutory requirements relating to pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- Provide opportunities for the middle leaders, together with the new head of school, to develop a system for managing new initiatives and regularly evaluating their impact on school improvement.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

There are good relationships between staff and pupils. Most pupils say that there is little bullying and are confident to approach an adult if they need to. The whole-school approach to managing behaviour, using 'Golden Rules,' has had a positive impact. Pupils enjoy golden time and are reluctant to miss it as a consequence of any unacceptable behaviour. Pupils have a good understanding of how to lead a healthy lifestyle. Many of them demonstrate healthy eating at playtime and lunchtime. Several cycle to school while others join the walking bus on two days of the week. Pupils' attendance is above the national average because staff take care to make sure all pupils are accounted for and follow up any absence rigorously. Inspectors noted that most pupils arrived on time. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory overall, but learning and progress are variable across the school. The standards of work observed in lessons and in books were broadly average. Over recent years there has been a dip in progress from Year 2 to Year 3. The staff are aware of this and are working successfully to address it. Teachers are held accountable for the progress made from Year 3 to 6. The latest school data show that progress is at least satisfactory for these year groups, and some pupils are making good progress. Mathematics is the weakest of the key tested subjects. From a lower starting point in Year 3, pupils are not making as much progress in this subject as in English and science.

Encouraged to work in teams, pupils collaborate and work together sensibly, developing important life skills. For example, the school stationery shop is run confidently by older pupils. Currently, they are training Year 5 pupils in readiness for a handover in September. Members of the school council enthusiastically explained the role they played in the recent appointment of the head of school. They have had a significant influence on the life of the school, helping to design the timber trail and improve the toilets, although their impact on the wider community is currently limited.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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

How effective is the provision?

Although teaching is satisfactory overall, inspectors saw some good and outstanding examples. In these lessons pupils were highly motivated and keen to learn. Activities were well planned and matched to the needs of all pupils, there was good pace and clear assessment opportunities. As a result of such provision, pupils make good progress because learning is fun and pupils develop confidence in their own abilities. On other occasions, the work was not suitably tailored to specific learning needs. In addition, marking, although exemplary in one class, is inconsistent and in mathematics it sometimes refers to presentational issues rather than success criteria. Suitable arrangements are made to support those who find reading and writing more difficult. Workbooks of different colours are provided and some class whiteboards have different coloured backgrounds. The school's care for pupils' special educational needs has been recognised by the 'Dyslexia Friendly' accreditation.

In one outstanding lesson, the lead teacher used information and communication technology to engage and motivate the pupils. When the inspector joined the lesson, pupils were engrossed in watching a film clip. They were all focused on the learning objective and afterwards worked well in pairs to predict the next part in the story. Ably supported by a colleague, the lead teacher helped the pupils to plan a response to a writing competition based on the film clip. She used effective, tailored questioning to reinforce learning. Pupils were expected to talk to each other and collaborate on a

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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written outcome. This is not always the case. Some teachers talk too much and allow pupils to be passive for too long. The use of a lead teacher to model good practice is beginning to have a positive impact on raising the standard of teaching across the school.

The curriculum is developing and pupils have more opportunities to use their skills across a range of subjects. This is evident in the writing on displays such as 'Where in the world is Olly the owl?' Enrichment activities are available and pupils talk positively about educational visits. Year 3 pupils visited a local Gurdwara during the inspection. They enjoyed the visit and were able to explain about what they had learned. Extra-curricular activities are well attended and pupils say they enjoy sport. Vulnerable pupils are well cared for and supported. Detailed notes are kept on these individual pupils and external agencies are effectively involved.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
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 executive headteacher is a motivational leader and has maintained stability in a period of significant change. She has clarity of vision and determination to drive school improvement. The federation leadership team is enthusiastic and keen to support her but its members lack sufficient experience of whole-school and federation leadership. The middle leaders acknowledge that they do not play a sufficiently strategic role. They realise that not enough regular evaluation has been carried out on new initiatives to check impact on pupils' attainment, learning and progress. The executive headteacher acknowledges that she has taken on too much of the operational work herself. The new head of school demonstrates a grasp of the issues facing the school and communicated her eagerness to get started. Governors are involved in the life of the school and discharge their responsibilities to support and challenge very effectively. They take their responsibility to probe the school's effectiveness very seriously. However, they are not sufficiently clear about some aspects of their leadership role, particularly about legal matters relating to pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. At the time of the inspection all safeguarding practices were satisfactory and in line with current government guidance. Child protection procedures are clear and training for all staff is up to date. Careful steps are taken to ensure that pupils are safe on the school site. Detailed documentation ensures that all adults who enter the school are vetted carefully. The school has an effective system for communicating with parents and

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carers. A learning mentor and family support adviser run the 'Chameleons' base. This relatively new initiative is welcomed by parents and carers, who value the support for families and their children. The school has a good understanding of its local community. The federation leadership team recognises that its community cohesion action plan, although satisfactory, is not sufficient to develop pupils' understanding of national and global aspects of living together. The school promotes equality of opportunity satisfactorily.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
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	3
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	3

Views of parents and carers

Questionnaires indicate that most parents and carers are positive about the school. A few do not think that the school takes account of their suggestions and concerns or help them to support their child's learning. However, inspectors found these aspects of provision to be satisfactory.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Short Heath 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 80 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 223 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	34	43	44	55	2	3	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	39	49	41	51	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	22	28	53	66	4	5	1	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	31	39	45	56	4	5	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	29	36	48	60	2	3	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	23	29	49	61	7	9	1	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	25	31	52	65	2	3	1	1
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)	30	38	48	60	0	0	1	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	26	33	49	61	3	4	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	23	29	46	58	5	6	1	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	20	25	49	61	9	11	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	23	29	56	70	1	1	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	29	36	47	59	3	4	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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	51	45	0	4
Primary schools	6	41	42	10
Secondary schools	8	34	44	14
Sixth forms	10	37	50	3
Special schools	32	38	25	5
Pupil referral units	12	43	31	14
All schools	9	40	40	10

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 is for the period 1 September to 31 December 2009 and is the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn term 2009 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

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.



2 July 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Short Heath Junior School, Willenhall, WV12 4DS

Thank you for your warm welcome when we visited your school recently. I am writing to let you know we judged your school to be satisfactory. We thought you were well behaved, polite and friendly. You told us you enjoy school and in particular the fun club, educational visits and sport. You all seem to know how to keep healthy. Well done to all of you who cycle or join the walking bus on Wednesdays and Fridays! We were impressed by your behaviour and the way you cared for the new Year 3 pupils who visited Short Heath. It was good to meet your new head of school and see how you welcomed her in your transition assembly.

We have asked the adults to make your school better by helping you to make faster progress to reach higher standards, particularly in mathematics. Your teachers work hard and we have asked them to make sure the work they give you to do in lessons is just at the right level not too easy but not too hard and to make sure you know how to improve your work and understand your targets. The leaders, together with your new head of school, have to work together to make sure that any new ideas are leading to improved standards and helping you all to achieve more. We have asked the governors and Mrs Draper to work with others to make sure they know all about the legal requirements related to leading your school.

You can help to make your school a good one by working hard to do your best every day. I hope you enjoy the next few weeks and have a lovely summer holiday!

Yours sincerely

Linda Rockey

Her Majesty's Inspector

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