

# Sheriffhales Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique reference number</b>	123396
<b>Local authority</b>	Shropshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	380650
<b>Inspection dates</b>	22–23 February 2012
<b>Lead inspector</b>	Roy Bowers HMI

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>	04–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	72
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Shaun Western
<b>Headteacher</b>	Sally Lill
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	28 November 2006
<b>School address</b>	Sheriffhales Shifnal TF11 8RA
<b>Telephone number</b>	01952 460204
<b>Fax number</b>	01952 460204
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<b>Age group</b>	04–11
<b>Inspection date(s)</b>	22–23 February 2012
<b>Inspection number</b>	380650



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## Introduction

Inspection team

Roy Bowers

Her Majesty's Inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspector observed 13 lessons taught by four teachers. He held meetings with groups of pupils, staff, the Chair of the Governing Body and a representative of the local authority. The inspector took account of the responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection, observed the school's work, and looked at the school's plans for improvement, assessment information, lesson plans, the school's monitoring information, school policies and 47 questionnaires from parents and carers.

## Information about the school

The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school. The proportions of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are typically average. Currently, the proportion of pupils with a statement of special educational needs and those who are receiving a higher level of school support is twice the national average. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well below average. Almost all pupils are White British. Very few pupils are of minority ethnic heritage. There are no pupils who speak English as an additional language. The school meets the current floor standard. The school has Healthy Schools gold status.

Currently, the substantive headteacher is seconded from the school to take part in an international education programme. The school is led and managed by a senior teacher at the school in an acting headteacher capacity. A supply teacher, employed currently by the school as a higher level teaching assistant, is teaching the classes of the acting headteacher.

## Inspection judgements

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Achievement of pupils</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Quality of teaching</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Behaviour and safety of pupils</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Leadership and management</b>	<b>2</b>

## Key findings

- This is a good school. An unrelenting commitment to removing barriers to learning helps ensure that pupils, especially those whose circumstances make them potentially vulnerable, are cared for and nurtured exceptionally well. The school's overall effectiveness is not outstanding mainly because there are some inconsistencies in the quality of teaching, especially in writing.
- Pupils' achievement is good. Pupils' attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 is consistently above average in English and mathematics. In writing, pupils' progress is slower than in reading and mathematics and relatively few pupils exceed the level expected for their age.
- Teaching is good. Respectful relationships between staff and pupils promote a calm, purposeful atmosphere. In most lessons, the activities have a clear learning purpose, pupils are guided through small learning steps and all groups of pupils receive sufficient challenge. However, in a few lessons, especially writing, teachers are not clear about what they want pupils to learn and some of the more-able pupils are not challenged sufficiently. Teachers do not take enough opportunities for pupils to practise their writing skills across the curriculum. All pupils have targets for improvement but they have little impact on raising pupils' achievement. Although there is some good marking, it is inconsistent.
- Pupils' behaviour is good. Pupils feel safe and are not unduly worried about bullying because they say that it is rare and is dealt with effectively by the school. The school deals very effectively with the occasional disruptive incident often caused by pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties.
- Senior leaders lead teaching effectively and manage teachers' performance well. They have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. Regular monitoring of pupils' progress helps leaders identify pupils who are not making the expected progress and provide support where necessary. However, the monitoring and evaluation skills of the middle leaders are less well developed.

## What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve pupils' achievement in writing by:
  - ensuring that the work given to the more-able pupils is always well matched to their capabilities and provides sufficient challenge
  - providing more opportunities for pupils to practise their writing skills across the curriculum.
  
- Raise the proportion of good and outstanding teaching by:
  - ensuring that, in all lessons, activities have a clear learning purpose, pupils are guided through small learning steps and all groups of pupils receive sufficient challenge
  - ensuring that all teachers' marking provides pupils with clear advice on how to improve and pupils are given opportunities to respond and learn from their mistakes
  - ensuring that pupils are reminded regularly of how work in lessons helps them meet their targets for improvement.
  
- Strengthen leadership and management by developing the role of the middle leaders so that they play a greater part in monitoring, evaluating and improving the school.

## Main report

### Achievement of pupils

Staff training has had a significant impact on improving pupils' achievement in mathematics since the last inspection. Consequently, parents and carers are correct in their view that pupils' achieve well in reading, writing and mathematics. All groups of pupils, including boys and girls and those pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds, make good progress in all classes. By the end of Year 6, pupils' attainment is above average. However, the progress made by the more-able pupils in writing is slower than in reading and mathematics.

In lessons, disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are supported well and make similar progress to other groups of pupils. They work effectively with highly skilled teaching assistants who guide them carefully through small learning steps. In a mathematics lesson, a teaching assistant used apparatus to show that grouping objects together in sets makes it easier to perform certain mathematical calculations. The school works exceptionally well to help individual pupils overcome specific academic and emotional barriers to their learning. Consequently, this helps to minimise any gaps between what these pupils are achieving and what is expected of them nationally.

Caring relationships help ensure that children quickly settle into the Early Years Foundation Stage and feel safe. They enjoy learning and enthusiastically take part in the wide range of indoor and outdoor activities. Effective use of the school grounds excites and motivates children and helps them develop an awareness and understanding of the natural world. The Reception children were captivated by the

smell, sight and feel of snowdrops as they talked confidently with their teacher about the signs of spring and how water and light are needed for plant growth.

Most children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills and knowledge that are broadly typical for children of that age. However, in some years, there is a significant number of children who enter with skills and knowledge that are not as well developed as those of most others of their age. Consequently, although pupils achieve well from their starting points, pupils' attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 is sometimes no better than average and in 2011 it was below average.

Pupils' attainment in reading is typically average at the end of Key Stage 1 and above average at the end of Key Stage 2. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage effectively learn the sounds that letters make and begin to blend these confidently together to make simple words. By the end of Year 2, most pupils can read books appropriate to their age and have a good understanding of the content. The more-able pupils can predict what might happen in a story and how characters may react if events were to change. Parents and carers say that they are pleased with the standard of their children's reading.

### **Quality of teaching**

The inspection findings concur with the views of parents and carers that teaching is good. In lessons, teachers manage pupils' behaviour very well, providing rewards wherever possible and taking all opportunities to raise pupils' self-esteem and confidence. Teachers provide pupils with many opportunities which promote their spiritual, moral and social development. The youngest pupils learn to take turns and share, and show their affection by giving the teacher a small wild flower they picked on their walk. Pupils' cultural development is promoted well through their studies of different faiths, including visits to places of worship, work with visiting artists and special days dedicated to a variety of cultural events.

In most lessons, especially mathematics, teachers are clear about what they want pupils to learn, pupils are guided through small learning steps and the activities provide challenge for all groups of pupils. For example, in one mathematics lesson on coordinates, lower attaining pupils were learning how to mark a single point by moving along one axis then up the other. They were guided carefully by the teaching assistant, who explained precisely each learning step and made sure that each pupil had a good understanding. The higher attaining pupils engaged in activities which reinforced and extended their knowledge and skills, then were given tasks to apply them by solving challenging problems. However, in a few lessons, especially writing, pupils' learning is not focused enough, some pupils are not guided through the small learning steps and work given to the more-able pupils is not much harder than that given to other groups of pupils.

Opportunities to improve and apply pupils' literacy and numeracy skills in subjects other than English and mathematics are often not taken. In one art lesson, children in the Early Years Foundation Stage were fully and enthusiastically engaged with a range of painting, colouring and drawing activities. Adults supported the children well with their tasks, but failed to take the opportunities to develop children's vocabulary, such as words related to texture, colour and shape.

Teachers regularly mark pupils' work and, in the best examples, clear learning steps are identified and pupils are given opportunities to respond and learn from their mistakes. However, although much of teachers' marking boosts pupils' confidence through motivational comments, some does not give clear enough guidelines on how to improve. All pupils have targets for improvement. However, many do not know what they are and teachers do not take the opportunities in lessons to ensure that pupils are reminded of their targets or given time to practise.

### **Behaviour and safety of pupils**

Nearly all pupils, parents and carers report correctly that there is a good standard of behaviour in the school and their children feel safe. They say that any cases of bullying are dealt with promptly and effectively. Pupils say that when bullying has occurred in the past it has always been in the form of name-calling. Older pupils are aware that bullying can exist in a variety of forms including cyber-bullying and through the use of the internet.

Pupils are polite and courteous and treat each other with respect and dignity. All groups of pupils play happily together and willingly support each other during lessons if required. Clear guidelines and effective use of rewards help ensure that pupils know what is acceptable. Attendance is high and pupils arrive punctually.

Pupils make a good contribution to the school. The anti-bullying committee organises events in lessons and assemblies about how pupils can guard against different types of bullying. The community committee promotes local relationships, such as by organising special lunches for local residents.

Strong links with external agencies, a high level of senior leaders' knowledge and skills and an ethos of care that permeates throughout the school help ensure that pupils whose circumstances make them potentially vulnerable, especially those with emotional and behavioural difficulties, receive the support they need. Consequently, incidents of disruptive behaviour are kept to a minimum.

### **Leadership and management**

Good monitoring and evaluation help ensure that senior leaders know the school well. Pupils' progress is checked regularly and discussions with teachers highlight any areas that require improvement and any pupil that needs support. Some teachers are beginning to be developed as middle leaders but their roles are under-developed.

Senior leaders closely monitor the quality of teaching and organise training for teachers to improve their skills if required. Following staff training, the school now has a high degree of expertise in teaching mathematics and helping those pupils whose circumstances make them potentially vulnerable overcome their barriers to learning. These skills mainly account for the school's successes in raising pupils' achievement and show the school's commitment to promoting equality and tackling discrimination. Improvements since the last inspection, especially in mathematics, demonstrate that the school has good capacity to improve further.

Members of the governing body regularly attend meetings and are willing to challenge senior leaders and hold them to account for pupils' achievement. Visits to the school by members of the governing body are increasing, with governors taking responsibilities for certain subjects or other aspects of school life. Safeguarding procedures meet requirements and all staff have received appropriate training.

The curriculum is broad and balanced, and is enriched well. There are many opportunities for pupils to play instruments and French is taught throughout Key Stage 2. The recently reorganised curriculum is beginning to help teachers provide more opportunities for pupils to practise and apply their literacy and numeracy skills across many subjects, but this is not fully developed.

In lessons, assemblies and through the variety of roles pupils take within the school, pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well. Pupils are provided with many opportunities to work collaboratively and help each other when necessary. Trained play buddies help pupils engage in play activities during the lunchtime break. They show a genuine concern for those pupils who feel lonely or upset and provide support where they can. Members of the eco-committee encourage other pupils to be eco-friendly and ensure that paper is recycled and waste food is made into compost.



## Glossary

### 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.
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	46	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and 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 governors and 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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
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.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

**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.**



24 February 2012

Dear Pupils

### **Inspection of Sheriffhales Primary School, Shifnal, TF11 8RA**

Thank you for being so friendly when I visited your school recently. I was very impressed with your polite and courteous attitude to me and pleased to see the sensible way you behave around school. I liked the way you play happily together and work hard in lessons. You say that you feel safe in school and your parents and carers agree. I was very pleased to see that you take little time off from school. Well done!

The teachers are very kind and helpful, and want you all to do your best. You go to a good school where you make good progress and everyone cares for you exceptionally well. However, we want the headteacher and governing body to make your school even better and have asked them to make sure that:

- in all your lessons, the teachers are clear about what they want you to learn, carefully guide you through the small learning steps and make sure that those of you who are already doing well make even more progress in your writing
- all teachers mark your books in a way that gives you clear guidance on how to improve your work and your targets are used to help you learn even more
- you are given more opportunities to practise your writing skills
- some of the teachers who have special responsibilities in your school get even better at helping you make even more progress.

All of you can help by continuing to work hard and keep coming to school as often as you can.

Thank you again for being so helpful and courteous.

Yours sincerely

Roy Bowers  
Her Majesty's Inspector

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