

Shotton Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	114152
Local authority	Durham
Inspection number	378804
Inspection dates	6–7 March 2012
Lead inspector	Gordon Potter

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	407
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ivan Cochrane
Headteacher	Rachel Orr
Date of previous school inspection	1 April 2009
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Introduction

Inspection team

Gordon Potter
Alan Keenleyside
John Pattinson

Additional inspector
Additional inspector
Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspectors observed 18 lessons taught by 14 teachers, including joint observations and visits to several classes with the headteacher. The inspectors held meetings with representatives of the governing body, staff, pupils, parents and carers and a representative from the local authority. The inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at a range of school policies and documentation relating to safeguarding and strategic planning, examples of pupils' work, assessment data and monitoring records. They also scrutinised the 66 questionnaires returned by parents and carers as well as questionnaires from pupils and 22 staff. No responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) were available to assist in planning the inspection.

Information about the school

This school is much larger than the average-sized primary school. Almost all pupils are from White British backgrounds. Of the few from other ethnic backgrounds, a small number are learning English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well above average. The proportion of pupils who are disabled and those who have special educational needs is well above average. The school has Healthy School status and has achieved the Activemark Gold award. The school meets the government's current floor standard for pupils' progress and attainment.

There have been significant changes to staffing since the last inspection.

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	2
Achievement of pupils	2
Quality of teaching	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	2
Leadership and management	2

Key Findings

- This is a good school. There has been a significant improvement in attainment across the school as a result of effective leadership and management. It is not an outstanding school because, while there is much good teaching which enthuses pupils and offers them challenge, teachers occasionally miss opportunities to allow pupils to take responsibility for their own learning.
- Pupils' achievement is good. From starting points that are generally well below age-related expectations on entry to the Early Years Foundation Stage, pupils make good progress to attain standards that are typically average in English and slightly above in mathematics at the end of Year 6. Progress has been inconsistent across school, but improvements to teaching have ensured that it is now good in the Early Years Foundation Stage and both Key Stages.
- Teaching is good overall. It is conducted with good pace and appropriate challenge. Teachers ask probing questions and check pupils' understanding during lessons. They allow pupils time to engage with tasks. Occasionally teachers offer too much help and progress slows. Targets are used well to help pupils understand how to take the next steps in their learning. Marking tells pupils how to improve, but teachers do not always allow pupils sufficient opportunities to act upon this advice.
- Behaviour is good. Pupils say they feel very safe in school. They enjoy school and say that misbehaviour is uncommon and is effectively dealt with by their teachers. Attendance is average and improving.
- Leadership and management are good. Under the excellent leadership of the headteacher, the senior leadership team has implemented strategies which have improved the quality of teaching and the curriculum and raised attainment. They are rigorous in using data and monitor teaching effectively. Leaders and managers accurately evaluate the school's strengths and weaknesses. They use the outcomes astutely to target further improvements.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- By the summer of 2013, increase the rates at which pupils make progress and raise attainment, by:
 - providing pupils with even more opportunities in lessons to work independently or together in a range of investigative activities which allow them to apply and to develop their basic skills across subjects
 - ensuring that pupils have opportunities to act upon advice about how to improve their work.

Main Report

Achievement of pupils

Pupils enjoy lessons. They are hardworking and keen to give of their best. They respond well to good teaching that stimulates their learning. They enjoy being actively involved in finding things out for themselves and respond positively to challenging activities. For example, pupils in Year 2 were set challenging tasks to extend their understanding of measurement. They were highly involved in a range of activities that included teamwork, measuring, recording and deducing. They rose eagerly to the challenge and made good progress as a result.

Children achieve well in the Early Years Foundation Stage and in Key Stage 1. An increasing number of children achieve the nationally expected levels at the end of the Reception class. By the end of Year 2, attainment is average. Attainment in reading by the end of Key Stage 1 is below average but, by the time pupils leave school, it is average. Attainment overall at the end of Key Stage 2 is average in English and above average in mathematics. Attainment has risen significantly in the past three years in both Key Stages. Pupils who did the national tests for eleven-year-olds in 2011 made outstanding progress in Key Stage 2. Successful initiatives to improve teaching and the curriculum have ensured that pupils make good progress across the school.

Boys' achievement is below that of girls, but the school has introduced initiatives which are closing the gap. Indeed, boys in Year 6 in 2011 made more rapid progress than girls in English and mathematics. All groups of pupils, including those who are disabled and those who have special educational needs, make good progress because the school identifies their needs accurately and provides effective support.

Almost all parents and carers are of the opinion that their children are making good progress.

Quality of teaching

Almost all parents and carers believe that pupils are taught well. In the best lessons, teachers make learning stimulating. They explain clearly to pupils what they will learn and how they will know if they have succeeded. Work is well-matched to the

needs of all learners. They plan effective opportunities for pupils to learn through practical activities, including research, role-play, games and investigations. Teachers use questions well to check what pupils already know and the progress they are making. There are strong relationships and teachers and teaching assistants interact well with pupils to support them in their learning. Pupils are allowed to engage with challenging activities in mathematics and are given time to work out how to answer problems for themselves. In English lessons in Key Stage 2, there is good teaching which is strongly focussed on extending pupils' writing skills. Teachers use games, poems, stories and films to stimulate imagination and ideas for writing. They model writing extremely clearly and enable pupils to have a clear understanding of the level of their work and what they need to do to take their learning to the next level. Opportunities are occasionally missed in English and mathematics to allow pupils time to practise and apply their skills in the exciting ways seen in the best lessons. Teachers offer too much help and the use of work sheets and teachers' prompts limits pupils' creativity. This is particularly the case in Key Stage 1 where teachers are more reluctant to allow pupils opportunities to explore for themselves. Targets and marking are used well to tell pupils how to improve their work and how to take the next steps in their learning. However, teachers do not always allow pupils sufficient opportunities to act upon this advice.

In the Early Years Foundation Stage, a range of engaging activities captures children's imagination, allows them to investigate for themselves and moves their learning on quickly. There is effective teaching of linking sounds and letters so that pupils make good progress in reading and writing. There is highly effective and imaginative use of the outdoor area which stimulates children's creativity and physical development.

The impact of the planned curriculum is good overall. It has been highly successful in raising attainment in English and mathematics. There are many exciting activities which help pupils to see the links between subjects and to develop and apply important skills, including writing at length, solving problems, teamwork and research. Work on topics such as the Second World War and the local environment, including walks on the old railway and research into coal mining, develops pupils' understanding of local history and geography. However, pupils sometimes have insufficient opportunities to develop their basic skills across subjects. Research into life in Africa, or the history of Egypt and other faiths and cultures develop pupils' imaginative, artistic, writing and language skills, as well as their cultural understanding. In these cases the impact of teaching on spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Pupils enjoy school. They are very polite to adults and respectful of each other and their school surroundings. Most parents and carers responding to the inspection questionnaires agree that, overall, there is a good standard of behaviour at the school. However, a few parents and carers express some concerns about behaviour in lessons. Good behaviour was evident in all lessons observed during the inspection and around the school. In those lessons where pupils were excited by their learning, behaviour was exemplary. The inspectors talked to many pupils during playtimes and more formally in group discussions. Pupils say that behaviour strategies are used

effectively and that the few pupils who find managing their own behaviour difficult respond well to a consistent approach and clear guidance. They say that bullying in any form is rare and is swiftly dealt with if it does occur. They feel safe and know that 'Buddies' and the teachers and other adults in school will help with any problems if they arise. They understand how to weigh up unsafe situations and how to take care of themselves and one another. Pupils particularly appreciate the praise system which encourages them to achieve well, work hard and attend increasingly well. The school council works very hard on behalf of other pupils. Its members are particularly proud of the actions they have initiated to improve aspects of school life, such as improvements to play equipment and strategies to help all pupils behave well.

The school has been successful in improving attendance, which has been rising securely over time and is now average. The number of pupils who are persistently absent has decreased significantly. However, despite the school's best efforts, a few families remain to be convinced of the benefits of ensuring their children attend regularly.

Leadership and management

The headteacher has had an excellent impact on driving school improvement. She has made astute appointments which have ensured that she is ably supported in the drive for improvement by an effective team of senior leaders and managers. The impetus for improvement has been put into effect through skilful delegation of responsibilities, the development of effective teams, well-targeted professional development and the sharing of good practice. The school has rigorous procedures with which it analyses pupils' attainment and progress. This enables the swift identification of groups and individuals who need additional support to close any gaps in their learning. Robust monitoring and self-evaluation highlight the right priorities for improvement and lead to effective action to tackle them. Rigorous analysis ensures that the school has a clear understanding of its strengths and where it could improve further. It is well placed for further improvement.

Capacity to improve is good. All subject leaders consistently apply the school's procedures to monitor and plan initiatives which have improved teaching and the curriculum and raised attainment. The school has a clear commitment to, and effective systems for promoting equality of opportunities for all pupils to be successful. It tackles discrimination firmly. Safeguarding procedures meet the current government requirements. The school has a range of effective partnerships; for example, to provide opportunities in music and sport; and to support pupils who have a range of learning, emotional and behavioural needs, and their families. The governing body is highly supportive of the school, has effectively managed a period of significant change and provides a good level of challenge.

The curriculum is good. There is a strong and effective focus on developing basic skills in English, mathematics and the use of information and communication technology (ICT), although these skills are not always developed further in other areas of the curriculum. Across the school there is a coherent and systematic approach to teaching reading with a balanced emphasis on letters and sounds, comprehension and, as pupils become more proficient, opportunities to analyse character and authors' use of language and plot. Well-planned enrichment activities,

including visits to residential centres, places of worship and to museums and visits from coaches and writers, help to develop pupils' strong understanding of other faiths and cultures. Accordingly, pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is good. This is further enhanced by the school's emphasis on developing pupils' interest in local history and a detailed programme of religious education. There are many popular extra-curricular clubs which promote learning and enjoyment in sporting, artistic and environmental activities.

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).

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.
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.



8 March 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Shotton Primary School, Durham DH6 2JP

Thank you for making the team so welcome when we inspected your school. We particularly enjoyed talking to you about your school and your work. We were impressed with your good behaviour and by your politeness and the care you show for one another. We also enjoyed your singing and your artwork. Your school takes excellent care of you so that you feel very safe in school. Most of you attend school regularly – well done!

You go to a good school and your headteacher and the governing body know how to make it even better. Your teachers make your lessons fun, especially when you explore and investigate together. You told us that you look forward to coming to school because you like your teachers, your lessons and after-school clubs and visits. Your parents and carers like the school very much.

In order to help you reach higher standards and make faster progress, I am asking your teachers to make sure that:

- you always have enough opportunities to find things out for yourselves and then use what you have learned to improve your literacy and numeracy skills
- you have opportunities to act upon the advice your teachers give you when they mark your work.

You can help by continuing to do your best and attending regularly. We wish you every success in the future.

Yours sincerely

Gordon Potter
Lead inspector

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