

Shirland Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	112620
Local Authority	Derbyshire
Inspection number	357148
Inspection dates	13–14 September 2010
Reporting inspector	Mary Hinds

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	5–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	139
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Rex Moakes
Headteacher	Kim Buxton
Date of previous school inspection	17 January 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspectors spent the majority of time looking at learning. This included observing 7 teachers, visiting 9 lessons, 1 learning walk and observing 2 assemblies. Two of the lessons were observed jointly with the headteacher. Inspectors held meetings with senior leaders, groups of pupils, representatives of the governing body and staff. They observed the school's work and looked at progress tracking, performance data, pupils' work, whole school and subject development plans, numerous policies and school documents. They considered the responses in questionnaires from pupils and 35 parents and carers.

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

- The quality of teaching and its impact on the progress all groups of learners make including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- How well the curriculum supports the development of basic skills and pupils' independent and problem solving skills.
- The effectiveness of the school's monitoring and evaluation systems in promoting better outcomes for all pupils, including children in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Information about the school

The school is smaller than other primary schools. Almost all pupils are of White British heritage with very few pupils from minority ethnic groups and none are from homes where English is not a first language. The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is average as is the proportion of pupils identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities. The school is currently subject to local authority reorganisation and operates from two sites. A new primary school is being built. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught in a mixed Reception/Year 1 class together with Year 2 while Key Stage 2 pupils are taught on another site. Annually almost 50% of Year 3 pupils join the school from a local infant school at the start of Year 3. There have been several changes to the teaching staff, including a new deputy headteacher. The school has gained a number of awards including the Basic Skills Quality Mark, Active Mark, Healthy Schools Status and Financial Management Standard.

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

2

Main findings

This is a satisfactory school. The headteacher has focused sharply on the key issues for improvement from strengthening the quality of teaching to improving the school's self-evaluation procedures so that everyone has an accurate analysis of strengths and areas for development. This has led to clear signs of standards rising, particularly in English, and the most recent unvalidated results indicate that more pupils are achieving the higher levels in mathematics and science. This is because the quality of teaching has improved with some being good or better. Equally the headteacher has high expectations of all pupils and her drive for excellence is shared enthusiastically by everyone. She is very well supported by a strong leadership team, especially the deputy headteacher. The governing body supports the work of the school well. However, it does not hold senior leaders sufficiently to account and is not fully involved in evaluating the school. Given the positive impact of leaders' and managers' work to date, with the success already achieved and the imminent prospect of moving into a new building, the school is well placed to sustain its record of improvement.

Children join the Reception class with skills that are in line with those expected for their age. By the time they transfer to Year 1 the majority of children are achieving levels above those expected for their age in most areas. This represents good progress. Progress is uneven in Key Stage 2 because although the quality of teaching is improving, it is not consistently good. There is little variation in the satisfactory progress that different groups make. School data suggests that a significant proportion of pupils are now making good progress in some year groups, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Although the school has been successful in raising pupils' achievement, there is still more work to be done, especially in accelerating pupils' progress in mathematics. This is because activities are not always accurately matched to pupils' abilities and therefore pupils are not sufficiently challenged. The quality of written feedback is not as effective as it is in writing, where pupils are given clear advice on how to improve their work.

The school has capitalised on its split site by emphasising different priorities for pupils' personal development and well being in each key stage. As a consequence, on both sites, there is the same high quality of care and support which is much appreciated by both pupils and parents. This outstanding care, guidance and support means that pupils show great care and consideration for each other. Pupils who are new to the school in Year 3 soon share a sense of belonging and develop very positive relationships in the supportive family ethos. Pupils' good behaviour, enthusiasm and high attendance make a strong contribution to their learning.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure more good teaching by:
 - building upon strategies for improvement so that all teachers apply them consistently well
 - making better use of the new assessment data to match work more accurately to the individual needs of pupils in mathematics
 - sharing existing good practice more extensively.
- Strengthen the role of governors in determining the strategic direction of the school by ensuring that:
 - the pace of improvement is sustained in raising attainment by rigorously challenging the school's leaders
 - increasing the influence governors have on strategic planning by being fully and systematically involved in evaluating the school's overall effectiveness.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Attainment at the end of Year 2 varies year on year due to very small cohorts but remains broadly average in all core subjects. Attainment at the end of Year 6 has improved since the last inspection and is now consistently in line with the national average in all subjects. The school has worked hard to close the gap between subjects and unvalidated data indicates in 2010 that more pupils achieved the higher levels in science, a significant achievement as this was previously well below the national average. The rate of progress pupils make is accelerating, although as yet it is not consistently good across the school, particularly in mathematics.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress because: intervention strategies are targeted, monitored and reviewed regularly; adult support is well managed through focused group work and intensive one to one teaching and the support staff's professional development is given a high priority for the maximum impact on pupils' learning. Given the satisfactory progress most pupils make in the basic skills of literacy and numeracy, they are satisfactorily prepared for future life. This commitment to developing pupils' basic skills is reflected in the school achieving a national basic skills award.

In lessons pupils work well together and are highly motivated because they enjoy their learning. Presentation in work books is good which reflects how proud pupils are of their work and efforts. Relationships in all classes are excellent. This engenders a supportive learning environment where pupils are confident to share their ideas and to speak fluently on a range of issues.

Pupils say that they feel safe and are confident that staff will listen to their concerns. They have good levels of awareness for their safety and the safety of others, as shown in their responsible and mature attitudes. All pupils adopt healthy life choices whilst in school. There is a healthy fruit option available for all pupils at break time. Extra curricular sports activities are enjoyed by many pupils. This is enhanced by the school sports partnership and inter-school competitions. As a consequence of the school's work to promote a

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healthy life style they have achieved a number of awards. There are many opportunities for pupils to contribute their views and to become active and responsible citizens. The school council initiated the "Buddy system" at break times. There are peer mentors, and projects which enable pupils to contribute to the wider community such as "Leaves for Life" which focused on a safer and cleaner environment. Pupils have a good understanding of different faiths and cultures through links with local places of worship and visitors to school. For example, pupils have explored cultural diversity through focused weeks based on human rights and fair trade.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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	2
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	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	1
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

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

How effective is the provision?

There is some good or better teaching in literacy where pupils benefit from a range of learning strategies to develop their speaking and listening skills, including the effective use of drama, which has had a real impact on boys' writing. For example, in one lesson observed during the inspection, pupils were highly motivated when creating and presenting an oral biography. The class teacher enthused all pupils to work as a team, negotiate, take risks and reflect on their learning. Her subject knowledge, skilled questioning and excellent planning, which clearly identified success criteria, encouraged pupils to evaluate their own progress and guaranteed their enjoyment. As a consequence all pupils made good or better progress.

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Where teaching is weaker, pupils tackle work which is not well tailored to their abilities or previous learning, particularly in mathematics. Although planning is based on assessment information and progress is monitored closely, information is not always used effectively in mathematics to accurately plan for the next steps precisely enough in order to challenge all pupils' abilities. Teachers share the key features of learning for the lesson but occasionally do not refer to them at critical times in order to remind pupils what they are expected to have achieved by the end of the lesson. Written assessments that inform pupils of their success and areas for development are a strength in writing. However, although pupils are given verbal feedback in mathematics there is less written guidance on how they can improve.

The curriculum has been extensively reviewed and now provides relevant and exciting learning experiences through a story based approach. This enables pupils to practise, develop and extend their basic skills especially in literacy and information and communication technology (ICT) and to a lesser degree in mathematics. This very inclusive school has adapted the curriculum well to meet the needs of all pupils, reflected in the strategies in place to develop literacy in both key stages, with an emphasis on speaking and listening and improving teachers' questioning skills. Both of these are having a positive impact on pupils' achievement. A particularly strong aspect of the curriculum is the level of partnership the school enjoys with the nearby specialist arts college, which has provided collaborative work on film making. The extra curricular activities are varied and enjoyed by many pupils.

The school provides excellent support for all pupils. This is because progress, learning and pupils' welfare are carefully monitored. All staff have an exceptional knowledge and understanding of their pupils. As a consequence, support is swift and targeted effectively in order to overcome any barriers to learning, including pupils who may be vulnerable and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. This is because there are good links with external agencies whose expertise is used well to supplement the work of the school. The learning mentor plays a significant role in this excellent pastoral support. She has worked hard to ensure that almost all pupils attend school regularly. The nurture provision is a haven for pupils who have low self-esteem and/or learning difficulties. Transition arrangements are exemplary at all stages, including for those Key Stage 2 pupils who join the school in Year 3.

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	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

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How effective are leadership and management?

Leaders at all levels play a significant part in creating a strong sense of purpose to enable the school to strive for excellence. The school's success in tackling areas for improvement, such as improving pupils' achievement, show how it has improved since its last inspection. The quality of teaching and learning has been a major focus with whole school issues and individual areas for improvement being addressed through good professional development for all staff. Equality of opportunity is satisfactory as the school continues to focus on improving the performance of all learners. Leaders monitor and evaluate the impact of their work and this self-evaluation is established across all levels of leadership. However, the role of the governing body is underdeveloped. Although it is rigorous in meeting all its statutory responsibilities, and is very supportive of the school, its role is less rigorous in providing challenge and holding school leaders to account. Safeguarding is effective. The school adopts all recommended good practice, has well developed systems to assess how effective their practice is and systematically gathers the views of pupils and parents. Partnership work with a range of providers contributes well to the pupils' learning experiences. Parents are fully supportive of the school. Their views are regularly sought and acted upon, for example there is now greater clarity about the role of homework. At a local level the school's sterling work to create a harmonious environment illustrates outstanding promotion of community cohesion at a local level. As a result of careful analysis, their effective plan extends this further which promotes additional links with schools locally and internationally. For example the school has worked with a school in Romania.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
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	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

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Early Years Foundation Stage

Reception children work alongside those in Year 1 and quickly settle into classroom routines. They display enthusiasm and enjoyment in their learning and are keen to make choices in all the well planned activities, both inside and outside the classroom. Their social skills and behaviour are a particular strength as they readily cooperate, take turns and share with other children. The environment supports the children's learning well with stimulating displays and areas which highlight the use of written language and early mathematical skills. Planning is thorough and ensures that activities are well matched to individual needs. These relevant and stimulating activities are based on regular and accurate observations and assessments of the children, which ensure that they are all challenged and make good progress. This is because adults have good insight into early childhood learning and development. Adults are skilled in promoting the children's confidence, learning and welfare. Partnership work is effective as staff liaise well with parents and outside agencies. Leadership and management are good because all staff work well together to ensure that key priorities for improvement are achieved. A further area for improvement is to use the outdoor space more imaginatively.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

The very large majority of parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire are very positive about the work of the school and the progress their children make. They commented positively on their children's enjoyment of school, the approachability of teachers and the care their children receive. A very small minority of parents and carers expressed concerns about some aspects of the school for example pupil safety and the effectiveness of the school's communication with parents. However the inspection found no evidence to support these concerns. Pupils are overwhelmingly happy with the school. Overall, parents' and carers' views reflect the inspection findings.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Shirland Primary 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 35 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 139 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	18	51	17	49	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	17	49	17	49	1	3	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	11	31	22	63	2	6	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	10	29	23	66	2	6	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	12	34	21	60	1	3	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	15	43	19	54	1	3	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	16	46	17	49	2	6	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)	16	46	17	49	0	0	1	3
The school meets my child's particular needs	13	37	20	57	1	3	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	12	34	19	54	0	0	2	6
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	9	26	21	60	2	6	2	6
The school is led and managed effectively	11	31	21	60	2	6	1	3
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	15	43	19	54	1	3	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 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	58	36	4	2
Primary schools	8	43	40	9
Secondary schools	10	35	42	13
Sixth forms	13	39	45	3
Special schools	33	42	20	4
Pupil referral units	18	40	29	12
All schools	11	42	38	9

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 are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 March 2010 and are the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn and spring terms 2009/10 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 pupils' 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.



15 September 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Shirland Primary School, Alfreton, DE55 6BN

Thank you all for the warm welcome you gave to us when we visited your school recently. We enjoyed meeting and talking to you. Your school is a satisfactory school which is improving quickly. It has many good or better features and you are right to be proud of it, although there are some things that it can still do even better.

You behave well around the school and in your lessons and you look after each other very well. You are really good working in groups and helping each other to learn and you readily help your classmates when they find things difficult. Some of you are now making good progress, although too many of you are still making only satisfactory progress. By the time you leave at the end of Year 6, your attainment is similar to that in most other schools. Your teachers and teaching assistants take exceptionally good care of you. They make sure that everyone feels safe and secure and they help you to feel good about yourselves. They also give you a lot of advice about how you can improve your work. However, this advice could be better in mathematics. Your headteacher and all your other teachers know exactly how to make sure that your school continues to get even better.

To help them to do this, I have asked your school to do the following:

- make sure that all teaching is at least good by matching the work that you do in mathematics so that it really makes you think and work even harder
- provide you with even more help on how to improve your work in mathematics by making written comments for improvement in your books
- make sure that your governing body, which helps your headteacher to lead the school, is fully involved in ensuring that your school continues to improve.

I know that you will help staff by always working hard and aiming really high.

Yours sincerely

Mary Hinds

Lead inspector

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