

Shirley Community Nursery and Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number 110663

Local Authority Cambridgeshire

Inspection number 356791

Inspection dates 18–19 November 2010

Reporting inspector Roderick Passant

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 408

Appropriate authority The governing body

ChairKarl GrenzHeadteacherAngela LeachDate of previous school inspection4 March 2008School addressGreen End Road

Cambridge CB4 1RW

 Telephone number
 01223 568885

 Fax number
 01223 506076

Email address office@shirley.cambs.sch.uk

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. They saw all class teachers, observed 19 lessons and looked at samples of work from Years 5 and 6. They observed the school's work including three assemblies and the breakfast and after-school clubs. Meetings were held with senior and middle managers, the school council, a group of Year 6 pupils and representatives from the governing body. The inspectors looked at a range of documentation including policies relating to safeguarding and the school improvement plan. They analysed questionnaire responses from 245 parents and carers, 117 pupils and 64 staff. The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

Does the school systematically tackle barriers to learning and progress?

■ How interactive is the quality of teaching? Does it make good use of speaking and listening and practical approaches?

Information about the school

The school is larger than most primary schools. It is a very diverse community, although the majority of pupils are White British. The next largest group, a fifth of the school, are from the Traveller community. About a half of these pupils travel during the May to November period. The percentage of pupils whose first language is not English is much higher than average; there are 30 pupils who are at an early stage of learning English. The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is much higher than average, as is the percentage of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The number of pupils with statements detailing their educational needs is above average. A far higher proportion of pupils than is usual (17%) joins or leaves the school at other than usual times.

The school is relatively new and opened four years ago. Phase 1 of the new building opened in February 2010 and it is anticipated that Phase 2 of the new school will be opened in June 2011. The new school is planned to accommodate a Children's Centre. As part of its extended school provision, the governing body manages a term-time breakfast and after-school club. It also operates term-time study support and booster classes and a programme of parent support. The Early Years Foundation Stage is composed of a part-time nursery which operates in the morning and afternoon and two Reception classes. The school has gained a number of awards, including the Equalities Award and Healthy School Status.

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

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

This is a good school. There have been significant improvements since it was last inspected. Initiatives and approaches identified in the previous report have become embedded and others developed so that the pupils achieve well.

Attainment, as measured by Year 6 tests in 2010, is well below average. There has been strong year-on-year improvement from historic exceptionally low standards. The progress that the pupils make has also improved so that there is a very close match between their potential attainment as indicated in Year 2 teacher assessments and the attainment they reach in Year 6. Low standards are being eradicated rapidly by a two-pronged pincer movement. Firstly, the pupils have for the past two years left the Early Years Foundation Stage with attainment in line with national averages so that they have a firm foundation from which to start the National Curriculum, which the school is building on. Secondly, the pupils in the upper school are currently making exceptional progress in lessons because of the outstanding teaching they receive. Learning in lessons is at least good across the school. The result is that school data, confirmed by inspection evidence, indicates that in this term, attainment in class has improved further and in almost all year groups, so that the large majority are working within the broad range of expectations for their age. The school is rich in data, which it evaluates very carefully, identifying who requires additional targeted support. The staff recognises the continuing need for additional catch-up activities to tackle pockets of underachievement and to accelerate progress further. They are closing the gap between pupils' attainment and the national averages. Morale is high in the school because the staff recognises that they can and are making a difference.

The school and staffing are now more settled; teamwork is strong and there is a clear, focused drive and momentum for improvement. In spite of operating on two sites, the staff has established one-school ethos and values. The pupils enjoy school and show very positive attitudes to learning in lessons. This is not always reflected in their attendance, which has improved significantly year-on-year, but still remains low. The attendance of Traveller pupils has improved and is currently above that generally seen for them. Attendance for non-Traveller pupils is currently nearing the national average and shows significant improvement. The school also has pupils who take extended homeland visits as well as authorised absences for religious holidays. Other barriers to learning remain: there is a high proportion of pupils joining or leaving the school other than at the usual times and a very significant proportion of pupils face personal challenges which adversely affect their progress over time.

The outstanding care, guidance and support the school provides for all pupils underpins their good achievement. The staff is very committed to the pupils; they know them well and value them as individuals. The school ethos and commitment to equal opportunities is exemplary. It is a highly cohesive and inclusive community, which is reflected in pupils'

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attitudes across the school. Year 6 pupils have an extremely mature attitude towards superficial differences in people, identifying what peers can do rather than focusing on what they find difficult. The result is that the school is a very friendly, welcoming community where pupils get on extremely well with each other and feel exceptionally safe. Behaviour is good and makes a very significant contribution to pupils' learning. The pupils have an excellent understanding of the importance of nutrition and exercise and are keen to adopt a healthy life-style. Over half of the pupils walk to school, others cycle and all take part in two hours physical education; many take part in additional clubs providing physical activity. They are supported well in their emotional needs and learn to solve problems without argument.

Whilst there is some good work in information and communication technology (ICT), the full potential of ICT to support pupils' learning within and outside the school is limited. There are some links between subjects, but these are not yet exploited in a creative way to provide a broader range of contexts in which all pupils can take the initiative, demonstrate their skills and gain success. As a result the curriculum is satisfactory.

Leadership and management, including governance, are good. The source of the uncompromising drive for continuous improvement stems from the outstanding leadership of the headteacher. She is supported very effectively by two deputy headteachers. As a result of their work, there have been rapid improvements in teaching and use of assessment. Together, they have a range of complementary skills. The school knows itself very well because it draws upon a range of viewpoints in assessing its priorities. Some leaders are relatively new in post, but are clear about what it is that they have to do. Given these very recent improvements that have taken place, there is good and increasing capacity to sustain improvements in the school.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise standards by:
 - developing the creative opportunities within the curriculum to link subjects together, in order to provide a broader range of contexts in which pupils can practise and demonstrate their skills, show their initiative and gain success
- building on the good practice in ICT to exploit its potential to support pupils' learning within and outside of school
- maintaining the drive to raise attendance.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

In lessons, the pupils are thoroughly engaged and work with enthusiasm. They concentrate well and work effectively with their 'talk partners', sharing and rehearsing their ideas. They are confident to give extended answers to questions. Often, they show very good recall of prior learning, as was seen in a geography lesson in the upper school. The pupils were able to recall key vocabulary such as 'source,' 'tributary', 'meander', as part of a 'river chant'. The ethos in lessons is purposeful.

Pupils who speak English as an additional language are making good progress. This is because; speaking and listening is given a high priority in lessons; key vocabulary is identified and explained; lessons contain strong visual and practical elements; the

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teachers model the learning well and resources are tailored to meet needs effectively. In addition, teaching assistants provide good support and, because new pupils are absorbed so effectively by their peers into the school community, informal opportunities to learn and develop their language skills from others are strong. Higher-attaining pupils are now being challenged effectively. There is an improving trend in the proportion of pupils gaining higher levels in national curriculum assessments.

The attainment of Traveller pupils has, for the past two years, been well above the national average. The strategic planning of and provision for the intensive one-to-one support that they receive following a period of travelling helps them to catch up much missed learning. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress in lessons because work is carefully matched to their needs. There are good links with specialist agencies to support these pupils and to help maintain their progress. All the staff supports pupils with emotional and behavioural issues extremely well. There is no difference in the attitudes and performance of boys and girls.

The school prepares pupils soundly for the next steps in their education. The pupils' positive attitudes to learning and good personal development make a significant contribution. Pupils are valued and they feel that their voice is heard. They take their various roles and responsibilities around the school very seriously and help to create the school's welcoming ethos. The school council is active and members of the 'eco team' worked with builders on designing a local garden. Years 4 and 5 produce the widely circulated school newspaper within the school community and pupils are involved in the 'Kids as Commissioners' initiative in Cambridgeshire. There are established links within the local community, for example in regular contact with local care homes. The pupils fundraise for local and national charities. They understand and abide by the school rules relating to kindness, safety and being responsible. They have opportunities to reflect on others' lives and learn to empathise. There are good opportunities to develop a range of social skills.

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

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning			
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	4		
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2		
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2		
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1		
Pupils' behaviour	2		
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1		
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:	4		
Pupils' attendance 1	7		
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?

Teaching and learning are good. Outstanding teaching and learning were seen, particularly, but not exclusively, in the upper school. There has been a steep rise in the quality of learning since the last inspection, particularly in the last four terms. This improvement has added impetus to pupils' progress.

Key strategies in all lessons include vibrant approaches to interactive learning. The teaching is enthusiastic, well-planned and draws on a range of visual and practical activities that are often short and snappy so that there is a good pace of learning. The teachers' caring relationships with the pupils ensure that classrooms are friendly places and this helps to promote pupils' confidence. Pupils' additional needs are identified early and there is a very wide range of interventions which are well-targeted, helping pupils' progress. In intervention and support groups, the pupils and staff work steadily. The pupils respond to the close attention that members of staff give them. The teachers share learning intentions and refresh pupils' prior learning effectively. Skilful questioning, targeted at individuals, results in clear understanding. Misconceptions are picked up quickly and checks on learning are made frequently, particularly in outstanding lessons. In such lessons, there is a strong sense that pupils are working in partnership with the teachers. Good use is made of assessment to support learning. Marking is detailed, identifying what the pupils have done well but also pointing to improvement. Members of the senior leadership team hold periodic meetings with the class teachers to monitor and

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evaluate the progress of all pupils, including specific groups. These progress meetings play a significant role in pupils' recent accelerating progress. All of the class teachers understand and use data well; assessments are accurate and planning is carefully adjusted.

Personal and health elements are particularly strong parts of the curriculum enhancing social and emotional aspects of learning and leading to pupils' good personal development. There is good provision for work in mathematics and literacy and the strong focus on developing pupils' writings skills is leading to improvement in this aspect. There is a good range of enrichment activities, including residential trips.

There are excellent systems in place to promote and encourage good attendance and clear action planning. The attendance officer and the learning mentor are rigorous in their monitoring and support; there are also good links with the educational welfare officer. Attendance is much improved. The school has built strong and sensitive connections with the Traveller Community through the tenacious work of a school governor. As a result, all the boys from the Traveller Community in Year 6 went on to secondary school. The breakfast club and after-school club provide a safe secure, pleasant environment where pupils can socialise, relax, or play. The academic development and well-being of all pupils lies at the heart of the school; this is reflected in the school's vigilance and support for pupils facing challenging circumstances.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

Under the good leadership and management, the staff has clarity of purpose. Learning and assessment have improved significantly because of the thorough work of the deputy headteachers. There is a strong, professional and reflective ethos. Members of staff are keen to improve their skills. The work of the school is monitored closely. Middle managers are now clear about their role in raising standards and their current improved impact on learning. Their action planning identifies steps to be taken. However, it is too soon to see the full impact of their work. School data are used well to measure and improve teaching and pupil outcomes.

Governance is good. The governing body is well organised, supportive and prepared to provide appropriate challenge. It has a good understanding of the strengths of the school; it monitors the action planning and is involved in the self-evaluation of the school and of itself as a governing body. It provides good strategic direction and influence, surveying parents and carers and using their views in making decisions. It meets statutory responsibilities and take its responsibilities for safeguarding extremely seriously; some

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aspects are outstanding. There are very clear procedures for monitoring pupils facing challenging circumstances. The school's commitment to equal opportunities and community cohesion is evident in its highly inclusive and cohesive nature. Close analysis of data leads to well-targeted interventions specifically designed to close the gaps in pupils' performance. The school has a carried out an audit and has an action plan to promote community cohesion further by developing global and national links.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement		
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	2	
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	1	
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2	
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion		
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2	

Early Years Foundation Stage

Outstanding leadership and management are promoting year-on-year improvement. Careful analysis and evaluation of assessment data leads to ongoing adjustment in the programme of activities within the Nursery and Reception classes. Action planning is detailed; identifying clearly how aspects of provision can be further sharpened and developed.

For the last two years, children have made particularly good progress from their low starting points to attain levels which are in line with national averages. They leave the Nursery with very good attitudes to learning and social skills. The children are enthusiastic and know how to work well together. Activities such as 'magic drawings' and 'passing a smile' reinforce social skills, basic school rules and being kind to each other. The children engage in their various activities and tasks, concentrating well. Their behaviour is good and is managed skilfully and positively by the adults through well-targeted praise. Teacher-led sessions are taught very well and the adults are skilled at developing effective learning opportunities through skilful questioning. Learning skills are promoted within fictional, fun contexts. to the use of 'Little Red Hen' gives opportunities to construct shopping lists and listen very carefully to the sounds in 'carrot' or 'nuts' and recognise initial letters. The adults have high-quality relationships with the children. As a result, the

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children gain confidence quickly. The indoor and outdoor environments are stimulating and strong staff teamwork ensures that activities run smoothly. There is a good balance of adult- and child-led activities. Detailed observations are used to tailor approaches in curriculum planning. Children with specific needs are supported well. The staff is vigilant towards children's welfare needs and there are good relationships with parents and carers. There are close links with the Traveller community which have resulted in more children from the community joining the Nursery.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage		
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	1	

Views of parents and carers

The number of parent and carer questionnaires returned was much higher than generally seen. Most parents and carers were happy with all aspects of the school and almost all thought that the school keeps their children safe and that the teaching is good. There were 54 comments. A minority raised individual concerns about aspects of school life which were discussed with the headteacher. The majority of comments from parents and carers were positive, stressing how happy their children were, praising the staff and expressing pleasure with their children's progress. One parent/carer summed up her child's attitude to school as: 'He runs into school in the morning and skips home in the afternoon.'

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Shirley Community Nursery and 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 245 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 408 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	148	61	88	36	5	2	2	1
The school keeps my child safe	151	62	87	36	1	0	2	1
My school informs me about my child's progress	125	51	111	46	3	1	2	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	119	49	114	47	8	3	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	128	53	109	45	2	1	3	1
The school helps me to support my child's learning	116	48	116	48	6	2	3	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	130	53	106	44	4	2	1	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)	103	42	114	47	7	3	2	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	118	49	112	46	7	3	1	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	112	46	104	43	12	5	1	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	97	40	123	51	8	3	6	2
The school is led and managed effectively	112	46	112	46	5	2	9	4
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	133	55	99	41	6	2	3	1

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

	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)				
Type of school	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 succes	ss of a pupil in their	learning,
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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: 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.

■ 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.



22 November 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Shirley Community Nursery and Primary School, Cambridge, CB4 1RW

Thank you for making me and my colleagues so welcome in your school. We enjoyed our brief stay very much. My particular thanks go to those members of the school council and Year 6 pupils who gave up part of their lunchtime to talk to us. Thank you too for completing the questionnaire.

I thought that I would share our findings with you. This is a good school which is helping you to make good progress so that the quality of your work and the levels that you reach are improving all the time. It is also helping you to develop well as young people. Your behaviour is good and you feel exceptionally safe in school. As a result, the school is extremely friendly and welcoming and you get on very well with each other. I was very impressed by how mature you were and how well you had taken the school rules to heart. Most of you now make every effort to attend school regularly. However, attendance is still not high enough, even though the school works hard and has excellent systems to promote it.

You make good progress because your teachers are very skilled and plan exciting lessons and this means that you enjoy learning and learn a lot in lessons. In order to raise standards further, I asked the headteacher to do two things. There is some good use of information and communication technology (ICT), for example the impressive Year 5 video on anti-bullying, but I have asked the headteacher to work with the staff to make even more use of ICT to support your learning. I asked her also to develop the links between subjects so that you have even wider creative opportunities to show and develop your skills.

The outstanding care and guidance that the school provides ensures that you are all supported very well. Each of you matters a lot to the staff in this school. Much has been done. The school will continue to improve if all of you help by making every effort to attend school as often as you can and continue to work hard.

Yours sincerely

Roderick Passant

Lead inspector

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