

Shirley Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	116105
Local Authority	Southampton
Inspection number	357881
Inspection dates	10–11 May 2011
Reporting inspector	Michael Pye

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

Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	270
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Richard Williams
Headteacher	Hazel Hayter
Date of previous school inspection	10 June 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. They observed 15 lessons, and visited two other phonics (the sounds that letters make) lessons. A total of 11 teachers were seen. Inspectors spoke to parents and carers and held meetings with members of the governing body, pupils and staff. The inspectors observed the school's work and looked at data relating to pupils' attainment and progress. The school's development plan, lesson and curriculum plans, governing body documentation and school policies and procedures, particularly those relating to the health and safety and safeguarding of pupils, were scrutinised. Inspectors also looked at completed questionnaires returned by pupils, staff and those from 109 parents and carers.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- The extent to which teachers use assessment information to plan appropriately challenging work for pupils. ♦
- The extent to which pupils are involved in self-assessment in lessons and the quality of teachers' marking.
- The quality of leadership and management at all levels and whether the monitoring, analysis and development planning is sufficiently rigorous. The current progress of different pupil groups, including those pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and minority ethnic groups.
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Information about the school

The very large majority of pupils in this larger-than-average infant school come from a White British background. There are a few pupils from different minority ethnic groups. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is well below average, as is the number with a statement of special educational needs. The largest group have moderate learning difficulties. A very small minority speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well below average. The Early Years Foundation Stage provision is provided in three Reception classes. The school has been nationally recognised through being awarded the national Healthy School and Eco-school awards. The substantive headteacher was appointed in April of this year after serving a period as acting headteacher. The school is part of the Upper Shirley Learning Community Trust which consists of a secondary, special and four other primary schools.

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?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

The school provides a good standard of education for its pupils. There are clear signs of improvement taking place and there are a number of outstanding features. The outstanding features include aspects of pupils' personal development, such as their excellent knowledge of healthy living and their contribution to the community. The pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, and the partnerships that pupils benefit from so well, are both outstanding features. Parents and carers appreciate the school's approach to education, with one writing that, 'The nurturing ethos, together with creative and exciting teaching, has meant that our child has thrived in his social, emotional and academic development.'

Children get off to a good start in the Reception Year and progress well. There has been a pattern of attainment at the end of Year 2 being well-above average. A dip to average attainment in 2010 led the school to analyse the data. It identified particularly the need for more independent learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The issue has been tackled successfully. Current work shows attainment in Year 2 is above the national average. Given their starting points, this constitutes good progress for pupils, including those known to be entitled to free school meals and those belonging to minority ethnic groups.

Teaching is good overall. Pupils benefit from very positive relationships with their teachers in lessons and are consequently prepared to give their views. Questioning challenges pupils, but there are inconsistencies between teachers in the extent to which they revisit and challenge individual pupils further or involve others in building on the initial answer. Pupils' behaviour is good. In a few lessons in which pace slows, such as when pupils are left sitting 'on the mat' for too long, their concentration wanes and restlessness occurs. Teaching assistants are very well deployed, often dealing with a number of pupil groups during one lesson. This approach reflects the good use of assessment data by teachers in planning work for pupils of different abilities. However, the regularity with which they plan sessions during lessons so that pupils can review their learning is inconsistent.

Links with parents and carers are outstanding. One parent wrote 'We are very impressed with the school. Staff are extremely committed, hardworking and approachable.' Adults work together very well as a team. Leadership has been distributed well and subject and phase leaders effectively support senior leaders in monitoring. Accurate self-evaluation leads to very appropriate development priorities being identified and this has brought about improvement. Stakeholders are involved very well in development planning. Some inconsistencies between subject leaders' action plans are evident, in that sometimes objectives are insufficiently precise. Consequently, difficulties exist when judging the degree of success of any changes introduced. Many members of the governing body, including the chair and vice-chair, are relatively new to their posts. Good sub-committee

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arrangements have been made to monitor the academic progress of the pupils and questions are asked of the school. Not all of the governing body is trained in data interpretation and consequently the impact of the new committee arrangements is not maximised. Safeguarding and health and safety issues are monitored satisfactorily by the governing body. However, a few processes for monitoring safeguarding procedures are not as well developed as they might be. For example, there is an insufficiently formal approach to involving and seeking the views of pupils over safety issues. Equal opportunities are exceptionally well monitored. The governing body drives improvement through agreeing challenging targets, which the school has met or exceeded. Attendance is above average and has improved steadily as a consequence of school actions. The recovery to the current levels of attainment and progress bear witness to the impact of effective monitoring and management. Such factors support a good capacity to sustain improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Remove the inconsistencies in teaching by ensuring that:
 - all lessons have sufficient pace to improve pupils' rate of progress
 - all teachers use questioning that challenges pupils' understanding further
 - there are more regular and planned opportunities in lessons for pupils to review their learning. there are more regular and planned opportunities in lessons for pupils to review their learning.
- Sharpen the impact of the governing body through ensuring that:
 - more governors receive training on interpreting assessment data
 - more formal approaches to ascertaining pupils' views are developed

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**2**

Pupils achieve well because they enjoy learning. In a Year 2 mathematics lesson, pupils, eagerly, swapped ideas as they matched work to answer cards. Pupils respect each other's views. During a Year 2 literacy lesson, pupils explored sentence starters with their 'talk partner', with each taking turns in listening to each other's ideas. The pupils feel safe. As a result of the work done to attain the national award, pupils have a deep and extensive knowledge of how to stay healthy. They react eagerly and show pride when accumulating their healthy lunchbox 'stars'. Pupils' contribution to the community is outstanding. Active links exist with the local hospital and pupils help trainee doctors to become more familiar with working with children. The Trust enables pupils to participate in activities such as the pond project with older students. The elected school councillors contribute very well to the life of the school. The Eco-School award has had a significant impact, for the 'eco-warriors' ensure that all members of the school are aware of where recycling and energy savings can take place. These activities are also effective in developing teamwork. Interesting and stimulating activities, such as the 'Zoo Lab' and the 'Sculpture Park', provide ample and excellent opportunities for pupils to experience wonder and amazement. They build very well their understanding of other cultures through links with a South African school.

Attainment levels are above average in reading, writing and mathematics. High-attainers, by the end of Year 2, reach an above-average number of the higher levels. A previous gap

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between Year 2 boys and girls in literacy in 2010 has been tackled well. Children enter the Reception Year with levels of skills and knowledge in line with expectations for their age. All pupils make good progress, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those learning English as an additional language. A minority, but increasing number of pupils, including some pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, make very good progress.

The level of pupils' cooperation and teamwork are extremely good. This, together with above-average levels of basic skills and numerous opportunities to develop their economic understanding and entrepreneurial skills, helps ensure that pupils are extremely well prepared for the next stage of their education.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	2
Pupils' attainment ¹	2
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	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	1
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1
Taking into account:	2
Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

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?

Pupils are involved well by teachers in self-assessment. Sessions are planned at the end of lessons for pupils to consider how well they have done. In a Year 2 literacy lesson based on writing riddles about a monster, pupils used 'traffic lights' to indicate the extent of their understanding. Pupils benefit extremely well from marking in literacy. They know the next steps to take in their learning because teachers provide objectives which show the pupils clearly what is expected of them. This practice is not embedded so well in other subjects, such as topic work. Lessons are well planned, with appropriate attention given to resources. For example, pupils in a Year 1 mathematics lesson were motivated when using

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laptops to practise addition using a computer game. However, inconsistencies related to pace exist between aspects of teaching, questioning and the provision of sessions in which pupils can review their learning.

The good curriculum provides a range of stimulating topics which promote pupils' enjoyment and contribute to good achievement levels. The school is tracking the pupils' acquisition of skills across the curriculum and is monitoring and reviewing where these may need reinforcement; the school acknowledges that there is still more to do to on this aspect. The curriculum has a number of strengths. Learning is made more relevant because links between subjects are highlighted well. For example, extended writing skills are developed through pupils writing a diary of the Great Fire of London. Another positive aspect is the link being developed between the early years setting and the Year 1 curriculum. Role play is promoted in Year 1 and the Managing Our Own Time (MOOT) sessions provide pupils with opportunities to discuss and plan their activities. The use of outside resources, visits, visitors and the expertise of the adults are outstanding. For example, a member of the governing body speaks to pupils about her home in Jamaica and teaching assistants lead work on topics such as Hinduism. Extra-curricular activities are well attended and include the very popular Mini Cooks club. ♦

Many aspects of care, guidance and support are very strong. Case studies demonstrate a very proactive approach to seeking a wide range of external support for pupils and their families. Regular assessment and progress reviews allow the school to identify quickly those pupils requiring additional support. Very appropriate intervention for such pupils is introduced, whether the need arises from a social, educational, mental health or other health difficulty. Pupils benefit from well-targeted work carried out by skilled teaching assistants. This work has a significant impact on lowering any barriers to learning. Guidance and support during transition periods are thorough and help prepare pupils very well for entry into junior school. Guidance for parents and carers is particularly strong in the Early Years Foundation Stage, but more could be done in other year groups to inform parents and carers as to how they can support their children's learning at home.

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	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The relatively new leadership team has quickly developed a shared vision and very strong teamwork and their impact is seen in improving attainment and progress levels. This improvement results from staff feeling fully involved. Teachers discuss possible new initiatives in 'Learning Sets' and thereby make important contributions to school development. Professional development is used well to aid the school. Following last year's

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results, teaching assistants were given additional training in how to ensure pupils learn independently. This has had a positive impact. Senior and other leaders monitor and evaluate effectively. However, some inconsistencies exist between middle leaders in the degree to which their action plans illustrate precisely how their subject is going to support whole-school plans.

Teachers, as a result of an established programme of lesson observations, receive helpful guidance about how to improve their practice. The monitoring and analysis of equal opportunities are excellent and gaps between different pupils' groups have been reduced quickly and are not significant. Monitoring identifies not only pupils' academic progress, but also their involvement in extra-curricular and other social activities. Inclusion is paramount; for example, no school councillor can stand twice, thereby ensuring a wider number of pupils can participate. The governing body carries out its statutory duties fully and safeguarding is satisfactory. It reviews safeguarding and health and safety policies efficiently and monitors well the safe recruitment of adults. However, a few aspects of how it gains evidence about safeguarding, such as more formally ascertaining the views of pupils, are insufficiently developed.

Outstanding partnerships have a very beneficial impact on pupil outcomes. For example, the Trust allows for the shared recruitment of specialists such as a speech and language therapist. Any savings help fund other in-school provision, such as the library. The Trust also provides opportunities for pupils to participate in such events as a music festival. Involvement with a local university has brought resources and learning opportunities for pupils regarding the working of the human ear and hearing. A thorough community cohesion audit has taken place and the school knows its local community very well. It is currently working towards establishing a link with a contrasting school in the United Kingdom. A very effective blend of modern technology, such as texting, and more traditional strategies, like an 'open door' approach, results in an outstanding partnership with parents and carers. Regular Parent Forums give them an active voice and aids school development planning. For example, the 'All In It Together' initiative involving a hospital specialist was a response to parents and carers wanting more information about children's emotional development.

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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	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

The Early Years Foundation Stage is good. It is improving rapidly and there are many outstanding features, including the children's behaviour. Children make good progress and leave with skills levels and knowledge that are above average. Children progress particularly well in their social development and their communication and language skills. A small-but-increasing minority make very good progress as a consequence of consistently good or better teaching. The number of outstanding lessons is increasing. Assessment procedures have been developed very well. Regular and accurate assessment of the children's achievements helps identify the next stage in their learning and allows teachers to plan challenging work for children of different abilities. The children are involved very well in self-assessing their work. They contribute extremely well to making decisions about learning during the highly effective MOOT sessions.

The curriculum has a very effective balance between adult- and child-initiated learning opportunities. Lessons are planned that motivate the children and consequently they enjoy their learning. In one session, children playing with water cooperated and used their imagination well, explaining excitedly, 'This is a whale' and, proudly, 'I've made a waterfall.' In a physical education session, the children practised balancing while a child who could not participate was included through recording the session using a digital camera. The leadership is relatively new and it is too early to see the full impact of all the many changes introduced recently. Leadership and management is, nevertheless, good. Strengths include the highly effective induction programme and accompanying workshops for parents and carers. Teamwork is very effective. While the external area is used regularly, the full impact of its role as a year-round outdoor classroom is curtailed by the absence of a covered area. ♦♦

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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 number of questionnaires returned is a little more than usually found. The overwhelming majority of these parents and carers are happy with their children's experience at the school. All believe that the school prepares their children well for the future. A very small minority expressed their concern that their children were not making sufficient progress. During this inspection, the inspection team judged progress to be good for the majority of pupils. A few parents or carers believe that the school does not help them support their children's learning. Inspectors judged that, in Years 1 and 2, more information sent home could help parents and carers in this respect. The vast number of parents and carers who returned the questionnaire feel that their children enjoy school.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Shirley Infant 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 109 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 270 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	75	69	33	30	1	1	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	75	69	32	39	2	2	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	53	49	52	48	4	4	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	60	55	44	40	5	5	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	74	68	33	30	2	2	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	66	61	38	35	4	4	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	72	66	36	33	0	0	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)	66	61	35	32	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	55	50	46	42	4	4	1	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	55	50	43	39	4	4	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	56	51	46	42	4	4	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	67	61	39	36	1	1	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	82	75	25	23	2	2	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	46	48	6	0
Primary schools	6	47	40	7
Secondary schools	12	39	38	11
Sixth forms	13	42	41	3
Special schools	28	49	19	4
Pupil referral units	14	45	31	10
All schools	10	46	37	7

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 2010 to 31 December 2010 and 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.

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

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

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.



12 May 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Shirley Infant School, Southampton SO15 5XE

You may remember our recent visit to your school. Thank you for the warm welcome you gave us. You were eager to tell us about your school and we listened carefully. We believe yours is a good school. We believe also that it does some things very well indeed. You benefit extremely well from the links with people outside. For example, many of you will remember the doctors visiting and examining your teddy bears. Children in the Reception Year get off to a good start to their education. You have an excellent knowledge of how to stay healthy and safe. We liked very much how you are involved in taking decisions and helping others. Well done to the school council and eco-councillors for their work! You show respect for each other and listen to each other in class well done! Also, you have a good knowledge of people from different faiths and countries.

You progress well and benefit from good teaching. The quality of your work is better than that found in many other schools. Your teachers plan work that makes you think hard - you could help them by telling them when you find the work too easy. We have asked that, when questioning you, they challenge you to think hard. You behave well, but on occasions some of you become restless in lessons. We have asked the school to ensure you do not spend too much time sitting on the carpet and that the lesson is not too slow. You understand how well you are doing because your teachers give you time to 'traffic light' your work. We have asked that all teachers give you a chance to think more about what you understand or find difficult during lessons.

Your headteacher leads the school very well and all the adults want things to be even better. We have asked the governing body to learn more about how well you are doing. We have also asked that it learns more from you about school life! Your parents and carers agree that the links the school has made with them are good. We agree. We found also that the school is very good at making sure that you are all included in the life of the school.

Once again thank you for your help, and we wish you all the very best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Michael Pye

Lead inspector (on behalf of the inspection team)

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