

Sherdley Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	104769
Local Authority	St. Helens
Inspection number	366212
Inspection dates	23–24 June 2011
Reporting inspector	Stephen Wall

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 which gives Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills (HMCI) the authority to cause any school to be inspected. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	429
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Sarah Bowles
Headteacher	Mr Richard Thompson
Date of previous school inspection	11 November 2009
School address	Mill Lane Sutton, St Helens Merseyside WA9 4HA
Telephone number	01744 678683
Fax number	01744 678684
Email address	sherdley@sthelens.org.uk

Age group	3–11
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Royal Exchange Buildings
St Ann's Square
Manchester
M2 7LA

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. They visited 12 lessons in Key Stages 1 and 2 taught by 12 teachers. Observations were also carried out in the Early Years Foundation Stage. The inspectors held meetings with representatives of the governing body, staff and a group of pupils. Inspectors evaluated the school's work, and looked at relevant policies, the school improvement plan, records of meetings, the school's monitoring records and analyses of pupils' attainment and progress. Inspectors also looked carefully at the results of questionnaires sent out earlier by the school to parents and carers and pupils.

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

- How well all groups of pupils achieve, especially in English and mathematics.
- How effectively leaders and managers at all levels are driving improvement and improving the school's overall effectiveness.
- How effective teaching is in enabling pupils to make progress that is both rapid and secure.
- How successful the school has been in tackling the issues identified at the last inspection.
- The progress made by the governing body in providing appropriate levels of support and challenge.

Information about the school

This is a much larger than the average sized primary school in which the proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is broadly average. Almost all pupils are White British. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average. No pupil has a statement of special educational needs. The headteacher has been in post since September 2010. The school has Healthy School status and has gained the Artsmark Gold award.

The school was deemed to require special measures following the last full inspection in November 2009. Since then, it has received regular monitoring inspection visits.

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

In accordance with section 13 (4) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures.

The school now provides pupils with a satisfactory and rapidly improving standard of education. Good leadership has acted decisively to tackle shortcomings, drive improvement and rejuvenate the school's sense of purpose. Shortcomings are being tackled rigorously. As a result, aspects of the school's work that were judged inadequate at the last inspection are now all at least satisfactory and improving securely. Many other aspects of the school's work have also improved significantly, including the effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage. Consequently, the school demonstrates good capacity for further improvement.

School data show, and inspection evidence confirms, that attainment in English and mathematics at the end of Key Stage 2 is now average. Attainment is on track to improve significantly in future. This demonstrates that all pupils, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, are now making satisfactory and improving progress from their generally expected age-related starting points when they join the school. The attainment gap between boys and girls is closing rapidly.

Pupils say that they are enjoying school much more. This is demonstrated by attendance levels which have risen and are now above average. Pupils get on well together and with the adults working with them. Pupils behave well and are polite and welcoming to visitors. Pupils' preparation for future success is getting better as their attainment rises. However, the satisfactory curriculum presents pupils with limited opportunities to develop their skills in information and communication technology (ICT) and to develop their literacy and numeracy skills across a range of subjects.

Much teaching is good or better. Inadequate teaching has been eradicated. In the Early Years Foundation Stage children make good progress because teaching is consistently good. In Key Stages 1 and 2, the quality of teaching is inconsistent with some that is satisfactory. This leads to some variation in the rate of progress pupils make in different classes. Leaders and managers are fully aware of this and plans are already in place to tackle the inconsistencies.

Leaders and managers evaluate the effectiveness of the school accurately. Assessment data is used astutely to set demanding targets and track pupils' progress towards them. The governing body is swiftly developing its role in supporting and challenging the school effectively.

Up to 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Tackle the inconsistencies in the quality of teaching in Key Stages 1 and 2 and thus raise achievement further by:
 - making sure teaching is always lively enough to engage pupils fully in their learning
 - making sure that tasks are always closely matched to the needs and abilities of different groups of pupils
 - making sure that pupils are always actively involved in their own learning.
- Improve the effectiveness of the curriculum in supporting pupils' learning by:
 - providing pupils with more opportunities to develop their information and communication technology skills
 - providing pupils with more opportunities to practise and develop further their numeracy and literacy skills across a range of subjects.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

In lessons, pupils' rapidly improving attitudes to learning are seen in their enthusiasm to contribute to discussions and the keenness they show to answer questions. Pupils enjoy working together in pairs and small groups. They are eager to contribute their thoughts and ideas. However, opportunities for pupils to work independently are occasionally limited because some teaching controls learning too tightly. Pupils' written work shows that they are taking growing pride in presenting their work neatly and that they are making increasingly secure and rapid progress. Attainment for the current Year 6 is average. Detailed school data show that the proportion of pupils set to attain the higher levels in English and mathematics in Key Stage 2 national tests this year will increase significantly. The progress of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is also improving rapidly because of the effective support they receive.

Pupils say how safe they feel in school. They show good understanding of the importance of a healthy lifestyle. Participation rates in sporting enrichment activities are high. Pupils enjoy taking on responsibilities. The school council and the eco council are active and valued by pupils. Pupils are heavily involved in improving the environment of their local community through their eco activities. Pupils show respect for adults and each other. They work and play together harmoniously. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory. While pupils' good behaviour shows a good grasp of right and wrong, opportunities for pupils to develop their appreciation and understanding of other cultures and diversity are limited.

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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	3
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	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

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?

The quality and impact of teaching on pupils' learning is improving rapidly. Teachers prepare their lessons well. They provide pupils with a good variety of activities to keep them interested and engaged. Teaching is making increasingly effective use of assessment data to match tasks to the needs and abilities of different groups of pupils. Occasionally, however, tasks are too difficult for some pupils and not challenging enough for others. Teaching assistants provide effective support for lower attaining pupils in all classes. Most teaching is conducted at a lively pace. However, it is sometimes a little slow and pupils' interest wanes. Some teachers spend too long on starter activities and introductions when pupils are keen to get on with things for themselves. This acts as a brake on progress in a few classes. Teaching is consistent in presenting pupils with practical problem-solving tasks wherever possible, especially in mathematics. In one Key Stage 2 lesson, for example, pupils worked with great interest and application on a practical task of working out percentages applied to everyday life situations. Their enjoyment was good as was their progress. Teachers mark pupils' work regularly. Most marking gives a clear indication of what pupils need to do to improve.

The satisfactory curriculum meets pupils' needs. It is broad and balanced. It provides adequate preparation for the next stage of pupils' education. Lower attaining pupils are supported effectively by teaching assistants and by the provision of one-to-one targeted

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support for individual pupils. The school provides a wide range of enrichment activities, including a residential trip for older pupils.

Good care, guidance and support ensure that pupils are well-cared for and known as individuals. Transition arrangements into the Early Years Foundation Stage and for pupils' move to high school are thorough and effective. Support for potentially vulnerable pupils is embedded well and supports their improving attainment and progress. The increasingly effective procedures for tracking pupils' progress are providing good support for pupils' academic progress and leading to rapidly rising attainment and achievement.

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	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

Good leadership and management have transformed the school. Shortcomings have been tackled very effectively so that the school's effectiveness is improving rapidly and securely. Planning for the future provides a sharp focus on improvement. Teamwork is strong. Middle managers are now secure in their roles and responsibilities. They are working effectively to drive the school forward strongly. Under the dynamic leadership of the Chair of the Governing Body, the members are now playing a much stronger role in supporting and challenging the school. The school has fully restored the confidence of parents and carers in its work. Concerns of some parents and carers about how effectively the school deals with unacceptable behaviour have been tackled head-on with a new behaviour policy that was presented in draft form to parents and carers to seek their views and amended accordingly. Regular workshops for parents and carers are now held to inform them about what their children are studying. These involve them closely in their children's education.

The school is becoming increasingly effective in promoting equality and tackling discrimination. It checks regularly on the progress and achievement of different groups of pupils. It is using the outcomes to provide more effective support where shortcomings are identified. As a result, gaps between different groups of pupils, such as boys and girls, are closing rapidly.

The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures is satisfactory. Procedures for safeguarding pupils are in place. The school site is secure. Appropriate checks are carried out on adults working with children. Staff training in child protection is carried out regularly. Risk assessments are in place, although attention to detail is occasionally lacking. Members of the governing body are starting to play a more active role in ensuring that policies and procedures for safeguarding are reviewed regularly.

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The school's promotion of community cohesion is satisfactory. An audit has taken place and this has led to a satisfactory action plan. While the school community is very harmonious and the school is active in the local community, actions to promote pupils' understanding and appreciation of different cultures and diversity are at an early stage of development.

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	3
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	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

The overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage has improved since the last inspection because it is being effectively led and managed; it is now good. Children get off to a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage. They make good progress and achieve well because teaching is knowledgeable and purposeful. Children learn to adopt healthy lifestyles because of the wide variety of activities both indoors and outdoors that promote their physical activity. Children play and work in a safe and caring environment. They fully trust the adults working with them to help them with any problems; strong relationships are the cornerstone of the Early Years Foundation Stage. Good foundations are laid for children's future success higher up the school. Teaching is consistently lively. There is a good and appropriate balance between teacher-led activities and the activities children choose for themselves to explore their learning. The environment for learning both indoors and outdoors is stimulating and welcoming. Adults have good knowledge of children's development and welfare requirements.

The curriculum is planned effectively to provide children with a wide range of learning opportunities. Tracking of individual children's progress is linked closely to planning activities to meet their developmental needs. Good quality progress reports are sent home to parents and carers on a regular basis. Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities are identified at an early stage so they can be supported well. Where

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necessary, specialist support from outside agencies is sought and provided. Transition arrangements into the nursery are highly effective in enabling children to settle seamlessly into their new setting. Transition arrangements into Key Stage 1 are planned well to provide an effective bridge for continuity of approach and learning. Adults working in the Early Years Foundation Stage demonstrate a common sense of purpose in helping children make good progress and adopt positive attitudes to learning.

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

Parental questionnaires are not normally distributed for inspections conducted under section 8 of the Education Act 2005, unless inspectors have specific reasons to request that the school does so.

However, inspectors looked closely at the questionnaires sent out by the school and returned by parents and carers earlier this academic year, the vast majority of which were supportive of the school's work. Some parents and carers, however, were concerned at the school's handling of unacceptable behaviour. Reference to the school's response is included earlier in this report. Observations of behaviour and discussions with pupils during the inspection led inspectors to judge behaviour as good.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

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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.



27 June 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Sherdley Primary School, St Helens WA9 4HA

Thank you for making me and my fellow inspectors so welcome during the recent inspection of your school.

You will be pleased to know that your school is now providing you with a satisfactory and quickly improving standard of education and no longer requires 'special measures'. Your school has improved in leaps and bounds since its last full inspection in November 2009. You are now making much better progress and your attainment by the end of Key Stage 2 in English and mathematics is much better. Many of the aspects of your school's work that were judged inadequate during the last inspection are now at least satisfactory and improving securely because your school is very well-led and managed. Your school has good capacity to carry on improving.

In order to help you make even faster progress, I am asking your school to do the following things:

Tackle inconsistencies in the quality of teaching in Key Stages 1 and 2 and thus raise your achievement further by:

- making sure teaching is always lively enough to engage you fully in your learning
- making sure that tasks are always closely matched to your differing needs and abilities
- making sure that you are always actively involved in your own learning.

Improve the effectiveness of the curriculum in supporting your learning by:

- providing you with more opportunities to develop your ICT skills
- providing you with more opportunities to practise and develop further your numeracy and literacy skills across subjects.

I am confident that you will continue to work hard and that you will do all you can to make sure that the improvements I have seen in your attitudes to learning and in your progress continue to grow.

I wish you all the best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Stephen Wall

Lead Inspector

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