

Shotton Hall Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	135838
Local authority	Durham
Inspection number	381932
Inspection dates	29–30 May 2012
Lead inspector	Gordon Potter

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	330
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Dennis Coates
Headteacher	Diane Buckle
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Waveney Road Peterlee SR8 1NX
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Introduction

Inspection team

Gordon Potter
Jane Beckett
Belita Scott

Additional inspector
Additional inspector
Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspectors observed teaching and learning in 30 lessons taught by 13 teachers, including joint observations of several classes with the associate headteacher and deputy headteacher. The inspectors held meetings with representatives of the governing body, staff, pupils, parents and carers, and spoke to the school's local authority education development partner. The inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at a range of school policies and documentation relating to safeguarding and strategic planning, examples of pupils' work, assessment data and monitoring records. They also scrutinised the 97 questionnaires returned by parents and carers as well as questionnaires from pupils and 40 staff.

Information about the school

This school is larger than the average-sized primary school. Almost all pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is above average. The proportion of pupils who are supported by school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average. The school meets the current floor standard which sets the government's minimum expectations for attainment and progress. The school is working towards the UNICEF Rights Respecting Schools Award.

The school opened in a new building in September 2010 after the amalgamation of the infant and junior schools. The headteacher was absent for significant periods through illness and resigned in April 2012. During these absences and subsequent to his resignation, the school has been led in succession by the deputy headteacher, a part-time associate headteacher and a full-time associate headteacher who was in post during the inspection. The associate headteacher leaves her post on May 31 2012. A new headteacher has been appointed to take up post in the next school year.

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	3
Achievement of pupils	3
Quality of teaching	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils	2
Leadership and management	3

Key Findings

- This is a satisfactory school. The deputy headteacher and the associate headteachers have skilfully raised staff morale and the confidence of leaders to develop initiatives. As a result of judicious management of performance, the quality of teaching is improving. They have established accurate information about pupils’ attainment to identify gaps in their learning. It is not yet a good school because recent improvements have not had time to impact on progress and achievement, and teaching, while improving, remains satisfactory overall. Schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit from an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.
- Pupils’ achievement is satisfactory. From starting points in the Early Years Foundation Stage that are generally in line with age-related expectations, pupils make satisfactory progress to attain standards at the end of Year 6 that are average.
- Teaching is satisfactory over time. Because of recent improvements, much of the teaching observed in lessons during the inspection was good. In the best lessons, teachers make it clear to pupils what they will learn, model learning well and offer engaging activities. However, teachers do not always plan work that is well matched to the learning needs of individual pupils or give pupils clear advice about how to improve their work. The curriculum offers too few opportunities for pupils to follow their interests or apply their skills in English, mathematics and technology in investigative activities, including in the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- Behaviour is good and pupils have good attitudes to learning. Pupils’ involvement in the UNICEF Rights Respecting Schools initiative has had a strong impact on helping pupils understand how to behave well and feel very safe. Pupils enjoy school and say that misbehaviour is uncommon.

- School leaders have offered strong and clear direction based upon accurate evaluation of strengths and weaknesses. Middle leaders are now accountable and have a clear view of their responsibilities, but their planning and evaluation skills are still developing. The governing body has a clearer view of pupils' attainment, has acted to address areas for improvement and offers increasingly focused challenge.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- By the summer of 2013, accelerate pupils' progress to be at least good, raise attainment and increase the proportion of good teaching, by:
 - ensuring that all work offers appropriate pace and challenge and is matched accurately to the needs of individual pupils
 - giving pupils clear advice about how to improve their work and take the next steps in their learning
 - providing pupils with even more opportunities in lessons to work independently or together in a range of open-ended, investigative, problem solving activities.
- Improve the curriculum across the school so that it provides pupils with more opportunities to pursue their own interests and apply their skills in English, mathematics and technology in a wider range of subjects.
- Embed the recent improvements to school leadership and increase the consistency and effectiveness of leaders at all levels, by:
 - ensuring the rapid and successful implementation of those strategies which have been designed to improve teaching and raise achievement
 - further developing the expertise of middle leaders so that they can create, monitor and evaluate appropriate interventions
 - making sure that the governing body continues to provide suitable challenge and rigorously monitors the school's strategies for improvement.

Main Report

Achievement of pupils

Pupils enjoy lessons most when they are actively engaged in challenging activities and are finding things out for themselves, and in those lessons they make good progress. For example, in a mathematics lesson in Year 6, pupils were fully engaged in researching, planning and costing a jubilee party, applying their skills in technology and calculation.

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are typical of those expected for their age and they make satisfactory progress from their starting points. In 2011, attainment at the end of Year 2 was below average and average for Year 6. Lesson observations, scrutiny of pupils' work and the school's own tracking show that progress for pupils currently in school is satisfactory although more unevenly for

English in Key Stage 2. Attainment is rising and pupils in Years 2 and 6 are on track to achieve average attainment.

Attainment in reading by the end of Year 1 is below average, by the end of Year 2, it is average and by the time pupils leave school in Year 6, it is also average. At the end of Year 6, pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals attain more highly than similar pupils nationally. Although they remain slightly below average overall, and in English, they have average attainment in mathematics and the gap has closed overall. Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make satisfactory progress. While the school accurately identifies their needs and there are skilled teaching assistants, not all work is well targeted at their needs, particularly in whole class sessions.

Most parents and carers are of the opinion that their children are making good progress. Inspectors judge that pupils make satisfactory progress overall.

Quality of teaching

In the best lessons, teachers are skilful at modelling learning so that pupils know exactly what to do and how to make a success of their tasks. They make learning fun by helping pupils to see the links between subjects and apply their skills in imaginative scenarios. For example, pupils in Year 2 enjoyed reading *Not Now, Bernard*, and were enthralled (and a little scared) when they had to follow clues to find the monster who had visited their classroom. Skilful teaching allowed them to talk together, gather and organise their ideas and begin to write their stories. However, this approach is inconsistent across the school. Teachers sometimes offer too much help and provide too few opportunities for pupils to explore together in open-ended investigative activities which develop independence and confidence. While teachers generally plan work which is matched to the learning needs of groups of pupils, it is not always finely focused on the needs of individual pupils, especially in whole class activities, or sufficiently challenging. In marking, teachers do not always tell pupils clearly how to improve their work. Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are taught well when work is clearly focused on their needs and they have the opportunity to engage with tasks under the guidance of skilled teaching assistants.

In the Early Years Foundation Stage, teachers plan work which is well matched to children's individual learning needs in reading and writing and there are opportunities for creative play. Occasionally, teachers plan work too rigidly and there is too little scope for children to follow their own interests. Skilful teaching of how to link sounds and letters (phonics) ensures children make increasingly rapid progress in reading and clearly targeted initiatives are helping pupils to make satisfactory but inconsistent progress in reading across school.

Almost all parents and carers believe that pupils are taught well. Inspectors observed some good teaching but not consistently across the school.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Pupils enjoy school. Most parents and carers responding to the inspection questionnaires agree that behaviour is good. However, a few parents and carers express some concerns about behaviour in lessons. Inspectors analysed the school's records of behaviour over time and talked to many pupils during lessons, at break times and more formally in group discussions. This confirmed that behaviour has improved over time as a result of the successful introduction of rewards and behaviour management strategies. These enable the few pupils who find managing their own behaviour difficult to respond well to a consistent approach and clear guidance. As a result, good behaviour was evident in lessons observed during the inspection and around the school. Pupils are extremely polite to adults and keen to talk about their work and their school. They are highly respectful of each other and are proud of their new school. They are aware of different forms of bullying and say that any form of bullying, including cyber-bullying, is uncommon. They say that behaviour is good in their lessons. Pupils feel very safe and know that older pupils as well as the teachers and other adults in school, will help with any problems if they arise. Pupils state proudly that the school council has helped to develop the charters that help pupils to behave well and care for one another. They are particularly appreciative of the way they have been involved in appointing the new headteacher and the actions they have initiated to improve aspects of school life, including the development of the playground. Attendance is above average.

Leadership and management

The governing body and the local authority have worked expeditiously together to bring stability to the school after a period of uncertainty in its leadership. A series of interim leaders have had a significant impact on improving school effectiveness. They have contributed to an improvement in the quality of teaching and the use of assessment data to measure attainment and progress and to identify gaps in learning. As a result, teachers and middle leaders are more accountable for pupils' progress and are now more confident in the conduct of their responsibilities. Improvements have been achieved through a clear analysis of the school's strengths and weaknesses and the prioritising of key initiatives that have tackled the underachievement which was prevalent in the last school year. Leaders have re-established clear procedures for performance management and employed well targeted continuing professional development to promote teachers' expertise. While the school awaits the arrival of its new headteacher, it has satisfactory capacity for further improvement.

The consistent application of the school's procedures to create, monitor and evaluate the impact of appropriate interventions is not fully embedded and some middle leaders are still developing these skills. Members of the governing body acknowledge that they had been slow to tackle some weaknesses in the past. However, they are now fully focused on developing procedures to monitor school effectiveness, including pupils' attainment, and offer increasing challenge. The school has an inclusive ethos and is overhauling its systems for tackling discrimination and promoting equality of opportunity for pupils to be successful. Safeguarding procedures meet the current government requirements. The school has a range of effective partnerships, for example, to provide opportunities in music, drama and

sport, and to support pupils who have a range of learning, emotional and behavioural needs and their families.

There is a strong emphasis on developing basic skills in English and mathematics. The curriculum increasingly helps pupils to see the links between subjects and develops their interest in, and understanding of, history, geography, science and religious education, as well as their enjoyment of drama, art and music. However, this approach is inconsistent across school and the curriculum offers too few opportunities for pupils to apply their skills in English, mathematics and technology in a sufficiently wide range of subjects. The curriculum promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development alongside well planned enrichment activities, including visits to museums, and residential centres for outdoor activities. These help to develop pupils' clear understanding of other faiths and cultures. There are many popular extra-curricular clubs which promote learning and enjoyment in sporting, music, artistic and environmental activities.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	54	42	2	2
Primary schools	14	49	32	6
Secondary schools	20	39	34	7
Special schools	33	45	20	3
Pupil referral units	9	55	28	8
All schools	16	47	31	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September to 31 December 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

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

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance:	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour:	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Floor standards:	the national minimum expectation of attainment and progression measures
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.
Safety:	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



31 May 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Shotton Hall Primary School, Peterlee SR8 1NX

Thank you for making us so welcome when we inspected your school. We particularly enjoyed talking to you about your school and your work and reading your views in the questionnaires you filled in. We enjoyed your artwork and your singing. We were impressed by the way you helped to draw up the charters that help you behave well, stay safe and care for one another. Most of you attend school very regularly – well done!

You go to a satisfactory school and your deputy headteacher and the governing body know how to make it better. You told us that you look forward to coming to school because you like your teachers, lessons where you are actively engaged, and after-school clubs and visits. Your school takes good care of you and your parents and carers like the school very much. In order to help you enjoy better lessons, we are asking your teachers to make sure that:

- you have more opportunities to find things out for yourselves and then use what you have learned to improve your skills
- they plan work that helps more of you reach the higher levels of attainment
- they give you clear advice about how to improve your work when they do marking
- they check that the things they are doing to improve the school are making your lessons better.

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

Yours sincerely,

Gordon Potter
Lead inspector

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