

Shepherd Primary

Inspection report

Unique reference number	117096
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	379346
Inspection dates	20–21 June 2012
Lead inspector	Najoud Ensaff

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	191
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Richard Sutton
Headteacher	Claire Foad
Date of previous school inspection	8 November 2007
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Age group	3–11
Inspection date(s)	20–21 June 2012
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Introduction

Inspection team

Najoud Ensaff

Additional Inspector

Mike Williams

Additional Inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspection team observed 21 lessons or part lessons taught by ten teachers, including the two deputy headteachers. Meetings were held with members of the senior leadership team and governing body. Inspectors observed pupils in lessons and around the school, listened to them read and spoke to them about their experiences at school and about their learning. Inspectors took account of the responses to the on-line Parent View survey in planning the inspection. They observed the school's work, and looked at lesson and curriculum planning, pupils' books, self-evaluation documents, the school improvement plan, local authority reports, the school website, records relating to safeguarding and the monitoring of teaching, and the tracking of different pupils' progress, attendance and behaviour. Questionnaires returned by 95 parents and carers, and others completed by staff and pupils, were also analysed.

Information about the school

Shepherd Primary School is smaller than the average primary school, with a part-time nursery. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is slightly higher than average. The large majority of pupils are White British and the proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, including those supported by school action or with a statement of special educational needs, is above average. Their needs mostly relate to moderate learning or speech, language and communication needs. The school meets the government floor standards, which set minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

Since the last inspection there have been several changes in the leadership team. The headteacher took up her role in September 2011; the two deputy headteachers and the Early Years Foundation Stage leader were appointed in September 2010. Most teaching staff joined the school in September 2010, the special educational needs coordinator joined in September 2011 and the Chair of the Governing Body assumed his role in March 2012. The school caters for children whose parents and carers reside in the local area, and there is a Children's Centre on the school site which is subject to separate inspection arrangements.

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	3
Leadership and management	3

Key findings

- Shepherd Primary is a satisfactory school. It has some good features: it is a welcoming, friendly place where pupils are well cared for and valued. The school is not yet good because the quality of teaching and rates of progress across the school are not yet consistently good enough to help pupils achieve well, given their starting points. Schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.
- Achievement is satisfactory. Children enter Nursery with skills broadly in line with others of their age. Pupils make satisfactory progress across the school. Attainment has risen over the last year so that pupils now leave the school with attainment in English and mathematics that is broadly in line with the national average.
- Behaviour and safety are satisfactory. Pupils are friendly and sociable. Their behaviour ensures there is minimal disruption in lessons, and they have a clear understanding of how to stay safe. They report that any rare instances of bullying are handled efficiently. Attendance over the last year has risen so that it is now average.
- Teaching is satisfactory with some examples of good classroom practice in each key stage. Not all teachers use assessment information effectively to plan and carry out lessons that meet the needs of all pupils, or to set them individual challenging targets. Although some marking is good, marking does not always provide enough individual guidance to pupils on how to improve. As a result pupils are not consistently guided or challenged to achieve well.
- Leadership and management are satisfactory. Safeguarding arrangements are secure and the school engages well with parents and carers. The monitoring of teaching and the management of performance are not sufficiently sharp to help the quality of teaching to improve rapidly. The curriculum generally meets

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pupils' interests, although there are few opportunities for pupils to apply skills across more than one curriculum area.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the pace of progress so that attainment across the school improves by the end of the next academic year by:
 - ensuring that teachers consistently use assessment information to plan and carry out lessons that meet the full range of pupils' abilities
 - increasing opportunities for pupils to use and apply their skills across the curriculum
 - ensuring that teachers set individual, challenging targets for pupils which inform marking and are regularly reviewed.

- Enhance the monitoring of teaching so that:
 - all teachers have a clear and effective view of what constitutes good teaching
 - lesson observations lead to individual improvement targets for teachers which are regularly monitored and reviewed.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

When children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage they have skills which are broadly in line with those expected for their age, although their skills in communication language and literacy are weaker than those in numeracy. Skills in solving problems, reasoning and numeracy develop satisfactorily so that most children seen on inspection were able to count to 10 and understand what adding and taking away meant, with some able to count beyond 10. Teachers and learning support assistants generally guide children in Reception to develop their communication, literacy and language skills, so that children seen on inspection were beginning to recognise and sound out simple words. Learning activities and progress in lessons are not consistently monitored and the purpose of activities is not always clear. As a result, children's progress overall in the Early Years Foundation Stage is satisfactory rather than good. Children behave well and demonstrate positive attitudes to learning. The vibrant and secure indoor and outdoor areas help them to develop well in their creative, personal and social skills.

Almost all parents and carers believe their children are making good progress in the school. Although progress is sometimes good, particularly in Year 6, it is more typically satisfactory throughout the school. Pupils in lessons respond well to tasks, demonstrating a willingness to work hard. Teachers have positive relationships with pupils but they do not all understand what constitutes good teaching. They do not consistently use assessment information to pitch work at the correct level or reshape

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tasks for pupils of different abilities. Pupils did not find the work consistently challenging in some observed lessons. As a result they made no better than satisfactory progress. In the lessons where pupils made good progress, they were well motivated and understood fully what they were doing. In these lessons, work was well matched to pupils' needs including for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs and higher-attaining pupils.

By the end of Key Stages 1 and 2, attainment in reading is generally broadly average. Skills in mathematics are slightly stronger than in English in Key Stage 1, and weaker in Key Stage 2, but attainment is broadly average throughout the school. As a result of focused interventions, former gaps in achievement, particularly in mathematics, between disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, those known to be eligible for free school meals and other pupils, are closing.

Quality of teaching

While some teaching, particularly at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2, engages and enthuses pupils so that good learning takes place, other lessons lack sufficient pace. This is because teachers do not always pitch tasks at the right level for the range of abilities within their class. Sometimes they do not intervene or reshape tasks in response to pupils' learning soon enough. Teachers do not consistently make good use of assessment data to plan work at the right level for individual pupils or provide them with clear enough information on how well they are doing and where they need to improve.

The most effective teaching was seen where teachers used their knowledge of pupils' different abilities and needs to tailor work well for them. In these lessons, such as a Year 2 poetry lesson, teachers understood and communicated the purpose of an activity very clearly; they adapted tasks and allowed pupils to assess their own learning, so that pupils fully grasped how to develop their skills further. In other lessons, teachers used resources, including the outdoor learning environment and technology well to engage pupils. These lessons motivated them and excited their interest in learning. For example, pupils in Year 2 were keen to record their observations about different animals as a result of having collected information outside. Both here and in another Year 6 mathematics lesson, work was well matched to the individual needs of pupils so that they made good progress. Teaching of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs also varies. Where teachers and learning support assistants effectively guide these pupils, they make good progress. Where they are less well supported or where intervention is not timely, they make no more than satisfactory progress.

Teachers promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development satisfactorily across the securely-planned curriculum through art, music, religious education and educational visits. Inspectors saw some good promotion of spiritual development in Year 6, where pupils created podcasts of radio advertisements. Pupils in the photography club used digital cameras to manipulate images in the style

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of Andy Warhol. During these activities, pupils experienced awe and wonder in being challenged to think creatively.

Marking of pupils' books is generally regular, with pupils sometimes being given useful suggestions about how to improve their work. The best marking consists of accurate and regular feedback, with teachers providing pupils with individual targets and an opportunity to respond to their comments. This good practice is not yet sufficiently widespread across the school. Consequently, not all pupils are sure about the next steps in their learning.

Most pupils think they are well taught. The vast majority of parents and carers agree, and believe that their children's individual needs are met. The inspection team found that although there is some good teaching, it is satisfactory overall.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Typically, pupils' behaviour is satisfactory. Most parents, carers and staff are positive about behaviour. A small minority of pupils reported that sometimes behaviour is less than good either around the school or in lessons that do not engage them.

Inspectors found pupils behaved well enough in the vast majority of lessons observed. They were polite, and respectful of others around the school. The school has good systems for managing and monitoring behaviour but a very small minority of staff report that these are not always effective. Pupils reported that they generally get on well together at school and that any instances of bullying are effectively handled. Pupils have a clear understanding of different types of bullying, such as verbal, physical and cyber bullying and they understand how to keep safe. Almost all pupils feel safe, and all their parents and carers agree. One wrote of the 'helpful' and 'compassionate' staff, while others commented on how happy their children were at the school.

Attendance fell in 2011 to below the national average. It has since risen for almost all pupils to broadly average, and gaps between the attendance of those who are persistently absent and others have closed.

Leadership and management

Since taking up her role in September 2011, the headteacher has worked hard to improve attendance and achievement with some success. Focused work in some areas of relative weakness in teaching, through professional development and performance management, has secured positive improvements. For example, better teaching of reading and mathematics in Years 2 and 6 in particular, has led to increased attainment in English and mathematics for these groups of pupils. These developments, and the increased involvement of the governing body, show that the school has capacity for sustained improvement. Leaders and managers have a concerted approach to school improvement. They have a generally accurate view of the school's strengths and weaknesses, although their monitoring of teaching in

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general is not always sufficiently rigorous. For example, when feeding back to teachers, leaders do not always set individual targets for improving teaching that are then followed up in subsequent checks on teaching.

Engagement with parents and carers is very positive; several parents and carers commented on the helpfulness of staff. The governing body increasingly provides appropriate challenge to school leaders, and ensures that statutory requirements for safeguarding are met. The school promotes equality satisfactorily, ensuring that gaps in achievement are closing for all groups of pupils. Pupils confirm that discrimination of any form is not tolerated.

The curriculum meets pupils' academic needs appropriately. All required elements are covered. Overall, pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted adequately. Studies of different religions and places of worship, as well as explorations of different countries and cultures, provide pupils with opportunities to develop culturally. Shared expectations of behaviour and opportunities for reflection through assemblies and in religious education lessons promote pupils' moral skills well; mixed-age reading and playground-buddy activities also ensure pupils' social skills are developed well.

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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	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.



22 June 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Shepherd Primary, Rickmansworth WD3 8JJ

We enjoyed coming to visit your school, watching you in lessons and listening to your views, including those that some of you gave in questionnaires. Thank you for being so friendly, polite and helpful during our visit. Your school provides you with a satisfactory education.

These are the best things about your school.

- It is a happy, friendly school with positive links to the community.
- You say that staff care about you and help to keep you safe. Our findings confirm this.
- You behave well enough in lessons.
- The senior leaders at your school are working together to improve how well you learn, and this is beginning to have positive impact.
- You have good opportunities to develop social and moral skills.

In order for your school to improve further, we have asked leaders and managers to:

- make sure that teachers always think hard about the work you are set in lessons so that it is neither too hard nor too easy
- make sure that you have opportunities to use the skills you have learnt in a range of subjects and ways
- make sure that your teachers always give you challenging targets which they use and review so that the marking in your books is as helpful as possible
- improve the way that senior leaders check that teaching is getting better.

You can all help by talking to your teacher when you do not understand how to improve your work and by continuing to work hard. I hope that these points will help you and your school to move forward.

Yours sincerely

Najoud Ensaff
Lead Inspector

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