

Sheldwich Primary School

Lees Court Road, Faversham, Kent, ME13 0LU

Inspection dates 8–9 November 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected	N/A
	This inspection:	Outstanding	1
Achievement of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school.

- Pupils at Sheldwich are great ambassadors for their outstanding school. They thoroughly enjoy school as shown by their high attendance and excellent attitudes to learning.
- Pupils' behaviour is exemplary. Pupils are polite, considerate and caring. They feel extremely safe at school and make an excellent contribution to all aspects of school life.
- Achievement is outstanding. Pupils make excellent progress from their starting points and by the time they leave at the end of Year 6, they reach standards that are significantly above those reached by most pupils nationally.
- Teaching is highly effective and provides pupils with memorable learning experiences.
- The headteacher is an outstanding leader with high expectations of pupils and staff and a determination that nothing less than the best is good enough.
- Leadership and management at all levels, including the work of the governing body, are excellent. Leaders check on the quality of teaching regularly and thoroughly and quickly identify and support any teaching that does not meet their high expectations.
- Leaders rigorously check all aspects of the school's work and identify the right priorities for further improvement, for example further development of the outside area for children in the Reception class.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 15 lessons or part lessons. They looked at pupils’ work in their books, listened to some pupils read and talked to groups of pupils about their learning.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher and deputy headteacher, staff with key leadership responsibilities and governors including the Chair of the Governing Body.
- Inspectors observed the school’s work and looked at a range of documents including the school’s self-evaluation, the school improvement plan, records of pupils’ progress and attainment and the safeguarding arrangements.
- Inspectors took account of 48 responses to the on-line (Parent View) survey as well as the school’s own survey and 19 questionnaires returned by members of staff.

Inspection team

Margaret Coussins, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

John Stewart

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Sheldwich Primary became an academy school on 1 September 2011. When its predecessor school was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be good overall.
- It is an average-sized primary school.
- Pupils attend from a wide area. Only 20 pupils live within a mile of the school.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported at school action is below average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also below average.
- The proportion of pupils for whom the school receives additional funding (the pupil premium) because they are known to be eligible for free school meals or are looked after children is lower than found nationally.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Develop the spacious outdoor area for children in the Reception class in order to further enhance and enrich their learning.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is outstanding

- When children join the school in the Reception class, their skills and knowledge are below those expected for their age. They make rapid progress and achieve very well in the key areas of communication and language, physical development and personal, social and emotional development. As a result, children reach and often exceed the goals for their learning by the time they start in Year 1.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs achieve exceptionally well because their needs are identified at an early stage, progress is rigorously tracked and very well planned support is provided and monitored to ensure its effectiveness.
- In the 2012 national tests, attainment in mathematics, although above average, was not as strong as attainment in English. In English, the school identified that boys, although making similar outstanding progress to girls in reading, were not making as rapid progress as girls in writing. In the current year groups, pupils' work and progress data show that effective action has been taken to narrow these gaps. School records show that pupils are on track to sustain or further improve the pace of progress and reach challenging targets.
- By the end of Year 6 pupils' attainment overall is significantly above average and the proportion of pupils achieving the higher Level 5 in reading, writing and mathematics is much above that seen nationally. This is outstanding achievement.
- Pupils supported by the pupil premium funding achieve exceptionally well and are helped to make fast progress. The school uses the additional resources very effectively. It provides a range of support, carefully tailored to meet individual academic needs and pupils' cultural, creative and social development by, for example, extra support from teaching assistants and through funding trips and musical instrument tuition. This ensures that all pupils have the same chances to learn and achieve as well as their classmates.
- Standards in reading are high with over a half of pupils in Year 6 achieving the higher Level 5 in the 2012 national tests. The school promotes reading for enjoyment very well and is constantly striving to further develop pupils' love of reading as well as their skills. Pupils are very confident readers. They speak enthusiastically and knowledgeably about favourite authors and styles of writing and show how reading has a positive impact and inspires their writing. Several pupils spoke of their aspirations to become, 'proper, published authors'.
- Pupils have a very secure knowledge of phonics (linking letters to the sounds they make), which helps them read unfamiliar words. However, in the Year 1 phonic screening test in 2012, taken by the current Year 2 pupils, the proportion achieving the expected results was below that found nationally. The school took this very seriously and thoroughly investigated the reasons. Its analysis revealed that many pupils who scored just below the expected level were higher attaining readers who were trying to make the made up words into real words as they were striving to 'make them make sense'. Nevertheless, the school reviewed and altered its approach to teaching phonics and has set challenging targets for pupils capable of reaching the higher Level 3 by the end of Year 2.
- Most parents and carers who used the online questionnaire are happy with the progress their children make.

The quality of teaching

is outstanding

- There are excellent relationships between pupils and adults, which promotes excellent attitudes and confident learners who are prepared to take risks and try things out without fear of failure. Teachers have consistently high expectations for pupils' learning and behaviour.
- Constant checks on how well pupils are doing and the progress they make ensure that teachers plan work and ask searching questions that extend and challenge pupils' learning while at the same time effectively supporting those who may find learning more difficult. On a very few

occasions, where teaching is good rather than outstanding, the level of challenge is not high enough for some pupils.

- Teachers make sure that pupils know their targets for learning. Marking is very useful because it helps pupils know how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve.
- Teachers plan lessons with lots of opportunities for pupils to collaborate, negotiate and share their thoughts and ideas and pupils work together extremely well. For example, they worked in groups to design a game and then wrote a set of instructions about how to play the game, which made learning meaningful and with real purpose.
- There is a clear focus on teaching basic numeracy, literacy and communication skills and skilled teaching of reading at the early stages and for higher attaining pupils. Strong links between different subjects give pupils excellent opportunities to apply their skills across the curriculum, for example pupils spoke about applying their mathematical knowledge of ratio and proportion when using recipes by Mrs Beeton in their study of the Victorians.
- In the Reception class, skilled and knowledgeable staff take every opportunity to develop children's language, listening, communication and number skills through constant interaction, lots of opportunity for role play both indoors and outside and close observation of their achievements. For example, one girl was the 'petrol pump attendant' filling up the scooters and trikes and made sure everyone who stopped at 'the garage' knew the price marked on the pump. The school has correctly identified that the spacious outside area should be further developed to provide more learning opportunities.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Pupils behave outstandingly well in lessons and around the school and school records show that this is typical of behaviour over time. They are very friendly and were happy to talk to the inspectors about their work and their school.
- Exceptionally positive attitudes to learning promote a very good work ethic in lessons. Pupils are enthusiastic learners who are keen to rise to the challenges set by teachers and have high aspirations for their future.
- The work of the school council, the eco group and the healthy schools group makes an excellent contribution to school life and the wider community. Pupils are particularly proud of their efforts to persuade the local council to provide a pedestrian path along the busy road near the school to ensure the safety of children and parents and carers walking to the school from the church.
- In discussions with inspectors, pupils agree that there is no bullying in school. School records over time show that bullying is extremely rare and exceptionally well dealt with when it does occur. Pupils show they have an excellent awareness of different types of bullying including prejudiced-based and cyber-bullying. They are very confident that if any problems were to arise, staff would deal with them quickly and fairly.
- Pupils feel very safe and secure in school and parents and carers agree that the school keeps their children safe. Pupils understand the potential risks and dangers outside of school and are particularly aware of how to keep themselves safe when using the internet.
- Pupils and their parents and carers say that pupils really enjoy coming to school, even wanting to come to school during the half-term holiday. This is reflected in pupils' high attendance rates and punctuality.

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The headteacher leads the school with a passion and determination to provide the best possible learning experiences for the pupils. She and the deputy headteacher have built a highly skilled leadership team and all work together very effectively to ensure that pupils excel in all they do. Questionnaires returned by staff were overwhelmingly positive and show that they are extremely proud of the school.

- The performance of teachers is managed very effectively. All staff know they are held accountable for their work and particularly for pupils' progress, as part of the process of setting targets for their professional development. Decisions on pay and salary progression are closely linked to how well teachers improve progress for the pupils in their class. Senior leaders check the quality of teaching regularly and thoroughly through lesson observations, sampling work in books, and checking planning and pupil progress information. Extra support is given to any teacher who needs it so that their practice improves.
- The headteacher and other leaders regularly check how well pupils are doing. If any are not making the progress they should, extra help is provided. For example, in 2012, progress in Year 3 was not as marked as in other year groups and following the school's effective actions these pupils are now making accelerated progress. Checks are made to ensure that pupils catch up quickly and make up any lost learning. The school is committed to including all children, whatever their backgrounds or needs, and ensuring that everyone has equal opportunities to learn successfully and is treated fairly.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is met exceptionally well through the curriculum and extra activities. The curriculum is exciting and provides memorable experiences and good links across subjects. A group of pupils agreed that, 'We have great fun in art and at the same time we learn lots about Ancient Greece.'
- Safeguarding arrangements meet statutory requirements, are well known and implemented by all staff. Policies and procedures are regularly reviewed and monitored and staff are kept up to date with training.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors support and share the ambition and high expectations of the headteacher to secure continuous improvement in the school. They have an excellent understanding of the strengths of the school and the areas that require further development. They are well informed by the headteacher and other senior staff, have first-hand evidence from their visits to monitor the work of the school and have a clear understanding of the data that shows how well the school is doing compared to similar schools. Governors bring a wealth of experience to the school and ensure that they are kept up to date through appropriate training. They keep track of what is working well and challenge and support the school effectively to account for the impact of decisions made. The governing body agrees how the pupil premium funding is spent and monitors how well the spending is securing positive outcomes for the pupils. They have a good understanding of the quality of teaching throughout the school and, with the headteacher, check that the performance of teachers is closely linked to pupils' progress and reflected in the salary structure. The governing body and the headteacher are adamant that only the best will do and any underperformance is not acceptable.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	137397
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	403702

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	212
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	David Milham
Headteacher	Sarah Garrett
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	01795 532779
Fax number	01795 532682
Email address	headteacher@sheldwich.kent.sch.uk

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