

# Shenley Primary School

London Road, Shenley, Radlett, WD7 9DX

**Inspection dates** 28 February–1 March 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school.

- Strong leadership by the headteacher and deputy headteacher has led to considerable improvement since the previous inspection.
- Teaching is good and sometimes outstanding. The quality of teaching is rigorously monitored. All staff have access to regular training and are held strongly to account for their performance.
- The learning activities and additional adult support for pupils who find learning difficult contribute strongly to their good achievement.
- Pupils feel very safe and their parents agree.
- Attainment in English and mathematics is above average by the end of Year 6. Pupils make good progress throughout the school.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are good. They are very eager to learn and to do well. Their behaviour in lessons, around the school and on visits or trips is good and often excellent.
- Relationships throughout the school are good, including those with parents. Parents are very pleased with the way their children are educated, and how much it has improved.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Although the proportion of outstanding teaching is increasing, there is not enough to lead to pupils making exceptional progress.
- Teachers do not always adapt planned activities during lessons quickly enough when they can see that more-able pupils find the work easy.
- Teachers are not yet ensuring that pupils fully understand the importance of phonics (the sounds that letter make) in improving their reading and writing, or making the most of opportunities to develop these skills across all subjects.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 18 lessons, including five seen with the headteacher. Inspectors also observed pupils moving around the school, in the dining room, in assembly and at break and lunch times. They also listened to pupils read formally and in lessons.
- Meetings were held with pupils, senior leaders, subject leaders, governors and a representative from the local authority. Inspectors took account of 74 responses to Parent View (Ofsted’s online questionnaire for parents) as well as parents’ spoken and written views, and the school’s own recent parental questionnaire.
- Inspectors looked closely at a range of documentation including the school’s data about the progress of pupils, self-evaluation records, improvement plans, safeguarding policies and records relating to the performance management of staff.

## Inspection team

Nichola Perry, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Nicholas Flesher

Additional Inspector

Lynne Thorogood

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- This school is much larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for pupil premium funding is below average. This additional government funding is provided to schools to help particular groups of pupils. In this school it applies only to pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The majority of pupils are White British.
- The proportions of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported by school action, and by school action plus or through a statement of special educational needs, are below average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- Since the previous inspection there have been a number of staff changes, including the headteacher, as well as considerable changes to the make-up of the governing body.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Make more teaching outstanding, and so improve pupils' key skills, by:
  - always adapting learning activities in response to pupils' needs during lessons, so that more-able pupils in particular make more rapid progress
  - improving the teaching of phonics across the school, so that all pupils rapidly acquire the necessary skills to take their reading and writing to higher levels
  - making more creative use of subjects other than English and mathematics to extend pupils' literacy and numeracy skills.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils make good and sometimes even better progress in reading, writing and mathematics. Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs also make good progress. In the past pupils have not made as much progress as they should. Considerable improvements in teaching and the way subjects are planned throughout the school have ensured that achievement has improved since the previous inspection.
- Children of all abilities make good progress in the Nursery and Reception classes from starting points that are broadly typical for their age. They acquire good knowledge, skills and understanding across all areas of learning because they are now taught well and have interesting things to do. The outdoor area is being refurbished to further improve the quality of outdoor learning.
- The school has improved the teaching of phonics in response to the poor results of the 2012 Year 1 screening check. However, the least able readers in Years 1 and 6 that were heard during the inspection were not able to make good use of letter sounds to help them read new or tricky words. Work in pupils' books shows that many pupils are still not applying their phonic knowledge well enough to help them write even the simplest words.
- Across the school attainment is now above average in reading, writing and mathematics. Improvements in the teaching and planning of mathematics have led to accelerated progress so that pupils are now successfully solving problems and applying their numeracy skills to real-life situations. More structured teaching of writing has contributed well to sustained improvements. For example, pupils of all abilities throughout the school now write confidently, using imaginative language.
- Learning is now consistently good, and sometimes better. Lesson activities are more accurately based on the stage pupils have reached. The school is aware that although staff expectations for what pupils are capable of have risen in all year groups, the next stage is to ensure that the most able pupils are encouraged to aim even higher.
- The progress made by pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is good. The school has made very good use of funding to provide additional adult support and activities for these pupils. Current school data and test results show that the attainment of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is close to that of similar pupils nationally, and that the gap between their attainment and that of other groups in English and mathematics has reduced.

### The quality of teaching is good

- Good teaching is now the norm. Some teaching is outstanding. Inadequate teaching has been eradicated. Good planning ensures that lesson activities engage pupils' interests. They are based on information about how well pupils are progressing, and generally well matched to pupils' ongoing needs.
- In the best lessons teachers are starting to help more-able pupils to learn at an even faster rate by providing more demanding activities when it becomes clear that some pupils can quickly do the work planned, although this practice is underdeveloped across the school. Pupils who find learning difficult are effectively supported by well-trained adults who, like teachers, ask probing questions and help pupils to engage in good-quality discussions.

- Where lesson activities are most demanding, teachers really challenge pupils through skilful questioning, prompting and supporting to help them think hard and apply their learning to their work. A good example of this was seen when pupils were watching a video clip and taking notes about the language being used, which they could then use in their writing about a totally different situation.
- In most cases teachers explain clearly the aims of the lesson. Use of 'steps to success' helps pupils to assess whether they have been successful. In many lessons teachers also demonstrate what pupils are expected to do so that time is not wasted. In the best lessons, work immediately becomes more meaningful for pupils when teachers link learning between different subjects to clarify its relevance.
- The work in pupils' books reflects consistently very high expectations for presentation. Books are a delight to look at and pupils are rightly very proud of them. Helpful and regular marking ensures that pupils are clear about how well they are doing. Teachers' comments are developmental and challenging, thereby ensuring that progress is never less than good.
- Discussions with pupils demonstrate their good understanding of how well they are performing. Pupils are increasingly involved in amending, improving, assessing and marking their own work, and that of others. They are expected to respond to teachers' marking, and say that teachers' comments help them to know how to improve their work.
- Pupils' books also reflect increasing opportunities for them to practise their literacy and numeracy skills in different subjects. This is helping them to achieve at a faster rate. However, not all teachers are making the most of opportunities to consolidate and extend the skills pupils develop in English and mathematics when they learn in other subjects. For example, pupils still have few opportunities to write independently and at length in a range of subjects.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils are good**

- Behaviour in lessons and around the school is good. Frequently, behaviour observed during the inspection was excellent. Pupils' attitudes to learning are also good, and occasionally very good. Pupils are really keen to learn, engage eagerly in activities and always try hard. Learning is rarely interrupted. Pupils listen well to their teachers and to each other, and work constructively together.
- Pupils agree that behaviour is consistently good, and say that what inspectors saw during the inspection was typical. They are quick to say that it hasn't always been like this. They rate their new headteacher highly and recognise that she has improved behaviour. They understand the behaviour policy well and know the range of rewards and sanctions, should anyone fall foul of the high expectations of their teachers. They love receiving rewards in assembly.
- The atmosphere around the school is highly positive, whether in lessons, moving around the corridors, in assembly or in the playground. Pupils engage in conversation readily and confidently, including with visitors, and say that they can trust all the adults in the school. They participate happily in class discussions and put forward their ideas, confident that they will be well received by their teachers.
- Attendance is average and improving. This is because the staff work extremely hard, using all the options open to them, including appropriate sanctions, to promote and encourage good attendance. Pupils recognise the importance of good attendance and say they love coming to

school. They are thrilled in the weekly celebration assembly when their class wins the attendance trophy.

- Pupils feel very safe and understand well how to keep themselves and others safe, including when they are using the internet. Pupils say that bullying and any other form of unacceptable behaviour is rare, but know what to do and who to inform should it occur. They speak with candour and knowledgeably about all forms of bullying, including inappropriate use of language towards different groups.
- The school provides high levels of support for pupils and their families whose circumstances make them vulnerable. As a result these pupils blend in and are not distinguishable from others. This ensures that they are able to thrive and succeed, and feel able to take risks in a safe and caring environment.

### **The leadership and management** are good

- Strong leadership by the new headteacher has built very successfully on improvements made by the deputy headteacher during her period as acting headteacher. They have formed a very effective working partnership which, with the support of a challenging and proactive governing body, is successfully driving the school forward at a rapid rate.
- Central to the recent rapid improvement, most notably in behaviour, pupils' progress and teaching, is a well-focused development plan. This effective framework guides leaders towards continuous improvement through clear and unequivocal objectives, based on accurate and effective monitoring that highlights precisely what needs to be improved.
- The headteacher has revised the system for managing staff performance. A mid-term review has been reinstated to help ensure that all members of staff are now held strongly to account for their own performance and that of the pupils. Everyone has good opportunities to engage in training appropriate to their role, and this is valued highly by teaching and support staff.
- The role of subject leaders is developing well. Effective leadership of support for vulnerable pupils and those who are disabled or have special educational needs is having a good impact, and they are increasingly achieving as well as other pupils. Good leadership of mathematics is ensuring that the work planned and closer monitoring of pupils' progress are leading to good achievement in all aspects of their mathematical learning.
- Improvements in English include a sharper focus on the teaching of writing and better teaching of phonics. However, there are still gaps in pupils' learning and application of phonics. Opportunities for pupils to practise their basic skills in mathematics and particularly writing have not been fully developed across all subjects.
- Many delightful displays in classrooms and around the school promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness well. The subjects and activities provided broaden pupils' horizons. Their development is further enriched through the good links with pupils' families and the local and wider communities. Pupils enjoy the many visits and visitors, and the wide range of additional activities available out of school hours.
- Parents highly appreciate what the school provides for their children. Their views, gathered through school questionnaires, Parent View, letters and those spoken to during the inspection, were overwhelmingly positive. Parents are full of praise for the new headteacher and are especially pleased with the dramatic improvements in behaviour and the progress their children

are now making.

- The local authority has provided a lot of support for this previously satisfactory school. It recognises the effective leadership which has led to pupils making more rapid progress, higher standards and the excellent improvement in behaviour.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- Governors demonstrate a clear understanding of the school's performance, both now and in the past. They also have a good grasp of what still needs to be done to become an outstanding school. They support and challenge school leaders by playing a central role in planning how the school should develop and improve, and checking on how well it is progressing towards its targets. They regularly check their own performance and capacity to improve, and have regular training to sharpen their skills. This helps them to be clear about areas where they need to improve. They show a secure understanding of the processes to reward good teaching and to tackle underperformance. They manage school finances well, and make sure that additional funding such as the pupil premium is used effectively to help pupils achieve as well as they can. Governors make sure that the school meets all current national requirements for safeguarding pupils.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	117150
<b>Local authority</b>	Hertfordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	405687

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	320
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Charles Sigler
<b>Headteacher</b>	Katy Longley
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	20 June 2011
<b>Telephone number</b>	01923 855864
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