

Shifnal Primary School

Curriers Lane, Shifnal, TF11 8EJ

Inspection dates 6–7 March 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Outstanding leadership and management have played a key role in the school's rapid improvement since its last inspection. This shows the school can improve even further.
- Achievement is good. Pupils' progress is good in all stages of the school. Lower-attaining pupils and those for whom the school receives additional funding make outstanding progress.
- Standards in English and mathematics have risen sharply and are well above the national averages.
- The very large majority of teaching is either good or outstanding. Teachers make lessons very interesting and set many of the learning tasks into real-life contexts.
- Behaviour is good and teachers manage it effectively. Pupils are interested and keen to learn. They are safe in school.
- Leaders at all levels set high expectations for all pupils. They check progress towards meeting challenging targets very effectively and so teaching and pupils' achievement have improved rapidly.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Not enough teaching is outstanding and not all groups of pupils make excellent progress.
- Some work is not difficult enough for pupils capable of doing harder work.
- Marking does not always clearly inform pupils about how they can improve their work.
- Pupils do not check how well they and others are doing regularly enough to help them understand how to improve.
- Pupils do not have enough opportunities to use computers and other forms of technology to support learning.

Information about this inspection

- Eight teachers were observed teaching. Of the 14 lessons seen, two were observed jointly with the headteacher.
- Inspectors looked at pupils' work in lessons and talked with pupils about their work. Pupils from Years 2 and 6 read their books to inspectors and talked about reading.
- Meetings were held with members of the governing body, the headteacher, the senior leadership team and staff with specific responsibilities. The lead inspector had a meeting with a representative of the local authority. An inspector met with a group of pupils and inspectors held informal discussions with pupils.
- There were too few responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) for them to be published. Inspectors noted the responses to the school's own recent questionnaire to parents and carers.
- Questionnaire responses from nine members of staff were analysed.
- A range of school documents was scrutinised, including policies for safeguarding, the school's self-evaluation documents and improvement plans, results of the school's monitoring of teaching, tracking of pupils' progress and lesson planning.
- Inspectors examined records of behaviour and attendance.

Inspection team

David Speakman, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Andrew Morrish	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is an average-sized primary school.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage and very few speak English as an additional language. None is at the early stages of learning English.
- The proportion of pupils receiving additional funding through the pupil premium (those known to be eligible for free school meals, children of forces families or in local authority care) is average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported at school action is about average. The proportion supported at school action plus or through a statement of special educational needs is average.
- The school meets the government's floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school does not make use of any alternative learning provision off-site.
- The school shares a site with a Sure Start children's centre and a neighbourhood nursery, Barn Owls, which works closely with the school to provide all-day provision. Both of these facilities are inspected separately.
- Shifnal Primary School has nursery provision each morning and a breakfast club which is run by the school. These were included in this inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of outstanding teaching by:
 - planning more difficult work for the average and more-able pupils so they all make outstanding progress
 - giving pupils more access to computers and other technology during lessons to support their learning in different subjects
 - giving pupils more opportunities to assess their own and other pupils' work at appropriate times in lessons to help them develop an understanding of how to improve their work
 - making sure that marking consistently lets pupils know how they can improve their work and that they are given time to respond to teachers' comments.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children start school with knowledge and skills which are typical for children of their ages. They make good progress in the Nursery and Reception classes in developing secure skills in reading, writing and mathematics, and in their social and emotional development.
- Pupils' achievement throughout the school is good and has improved since the last inspection. At the end of Year 2 attainment in reading, writing and mathematics is above the national average. Standards have risen rapidly so that by the end of Year 6 attainment is high.
- Results from national tests in Year 1 to check pupils' knowledge and understanding of letters and the sounds they make (phonics) exceed the national average because this is taught well by staff who are skilled at teaching reading. Pupils use a range of strategies to read tricky words. They can recall stories and talk about what they have read with understanding. Pupils read widely and enjoy reading.
- Records checking pupils' progress show that all pupils make the progress they should make from year to year in English and mathematics, with some making more progress than this. Pupils who did not reach nationally expected levels at the end of Year 2 made outstanding progress through Key Stage 2. Average and higher-attaining pupils made good progress.
- The pupils supported through pupil premium funding also make excellent progress. The school has successfully closed the gap between their attainment and other pupils in the school, and these pupils are now approximately two terms behind their peers. In 2012 pupils in Year 6 supported by the pupil premium reached standards about a year ahead of the same group nationally in both English and mathematics.
- Pupils who have special educational needs make excellent progress because work and learning methods are matched closely to their individual needs. Expectations for learning are high and staff set work which moves these pupils on very quickly. As a result, the standards they reach compare very favourably with the corresponding groups nationally.
- Pupils currently in school are set to continue the recent trend in improvement. Pupils in Year 6 are working at levels about a year ahead of where they are expected to be nationally for their age. Pupils are particularly good at solving problems in mathematics. They are good at using their number skills to quickly work out 'Countdown' type number challenges. Younger pupils worked independently to set up their own book stall on National Book Day, dealing competently with cash.
- Pupils are skilled in devising strategies to solve problems in groups and they were so completely involved in one lesson that nothing could stop them. In English, pupils write very well in a range of different styles and for different purposes. They wrote well-ordered and clear instructions to make a cup of tea. Younger pupils used vivid descriptive words when writing about their favourite fictional characters.

The quality of teaching is good

- Lesson observations, records of pupils' improving progress and the school's checks on teaching show that teaching has improved greatly since the last inspection. A significant increase in the amount of good and outstanding teaching comes from teachers planning interesting activities,

set into real-life situations that are highly effective in engaging pupils and getting them involved.

- Interesting lessons create a climate in which pupils try hard and are motivated to do their very best. Teachers provide a wide range of activities that promote good and outstanding learning. Pupils say that lessons are interesting. For example, in a mathematics lesson for Key Stage 2, pupils were asked to set up their own book stall from scratch. They were given good resources and had to work out for themselves how they were going to do it.
- Teaching of reading and writing is good and sometimes outstanding. Pupils across the school are grouped according to their previous learning. Work is matched well to their capability so they are confident to move forwards quickly. Teachers keep a careful watch on how well pupils are doing and move them onto their next steps when they are ready. This helps disabled pupils, those who have special educational needs and those for whom the school receives the pupil premium funding make excellent progress. However, average and more-able pupils who have completed this programme are not consistently given more demanding work to move them on at the same outstanding pace as lower-attaining pupils.
- Teaching assistants provide effective support for pupils, including those who require additional help, such as those who have special educational needs, by breaking tasks down into smaller achievable steps. This enables these pupils to make rapid progress. Teaching assistants successfully lead reading and writing groups and support teachers well in teaching groups where there is a wide age range.
- Pupils are aware of their individual targets. This means they know what they are aiming for and are encouraged to work towards their goals. However, teachers do not give them enough opportunities to check their own progress, or that of other pupils, at points throughout each lesson, so they do not develop a full understanding of what they need to do to improve their work.
- Marking of pupils' work is helpful but it is not consistent across the school in giving them good advice for improvement. Pupils' books show that the advice given by teachers in their marking is not always followed up by pupils.
- Teachers are skilled in using information and communication technology to present lessons clearly so that pupils develop a quick and clear understanding about what is being taught. During the inspection, inspectors saw very little use of computers and other technology, such as digital cameras or recording devices, by pupils to make learning even more enjoyable. Pupils say that although they have information and communication technology lessons each week, they would value the opportunity to use computers more regularly during other lessons.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils have good attitudes to learning and approach their interesting learning tasks enthusiastically. Behaviour is good and pupils are eager to start their independent or group work.
 - Pupils speak well about behaviour in school and feel safe. They know how to keep themselves safe and are happy in school. They know about different forms of bullying, but pupils say it very rarely happens and any instances are dealt with effectively. Attendance is average. Virtually all parents who responded to the school's own questionnaire say their children are happy, safe and well looked after, and that behaviour is good.
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- A strong feature of the school is the sensitive personal support which is provided for pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable. The school is proud of the good-quality care it provides for everyone, particularly through the pastoral support mentor or the 'lady who sorts us all out', as she was affectionately referred to by a pupil. This support helps them fit easily into school routines and make good personal development. Pupils with identified behaviour problems soon, with help, learn to conform to the behaviour expected by adults.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness is developed well. The school's well-established links with the local community ensure that pupils develop good social awareness. Pupils work well together, respecting others' views and showing courtesy. Citizenship plays an important role in school and, this year, three pupils have won prizes in the County's Outstanding Young Citizenship Awards. Pupils know the difference between right and wrong, generally make good choices and accept any consequences of poor ones. In lessons and assemblies, there are good opportunities for pupils to think and reflect.

The leadership and management are outstanding

- Outstanding leadership and management have led to excellent improvement in key areas of the school's work. A relentless drive to respond to the recommendations of the school's last inspection has led to improvements in the quality of teaching and learning, pupils' achievement and standards.
- Rigorous arrangements for checking teaching have helped improve teaching. The very large majority seen during the inspection was good or outstanding. School leaders visit classrooms regularly, look at teachers' planning and check pupils' work to ensure they are making good or better progress. Any areas identified for improvement are noted as priorities for development. Senior leaders provide good opportunities for training to improve teaching and they have taken part in training to increase the rigour of school's self-evaluation and planning for improvement.
- Teachers have clear targets which link to the school's priorities for improvement and relate to the national standards for teachers, which are used when assessing teachers' performance. Senior leaders hold all teachers to account for the progress their pupils make at regular pupil progress reviews. The school's evaluation of teaching is linked to salary rewards. School records show that salary increases are awarded only to teachers whose teaching was either good or outstanding.
- The school has an accurate view of its performance which is based in secure evidence from lesson observations, an accurate and searching analysis of data on pupils' attainment and progress, and information gained from pupils' work books. This detailed view links very well into school development planning, which is very detailed in identifying what needs to be done, how targets will be reached and how success will be measured.
- Pupils have many opportunities in a range of subjects to develop core skills such as writing, for example. They have fewer opportunities to use computers and other technology to support learning and develop their independent learning skills. The school has a strong personal, social and health education programme that makes a good contribution to pupils' personal development, their behaviour and to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The local authority has an accurate view of the overall effectiveness of the school, having graded it as one requiring minimal intervention. It supports the school well through evaluation visits and

written reports. It has provided advice and training for senior leaders on evaluation and improvement planning, which has been effective.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- The governing body has worked well with the headteacher in tackling issues raised at the school's last inspection. Governors are regular visitors to the school and gain a good knowledge of the school through first-hand experiences. They understand assessment data clearly and know how well the school is performing compared with other schools. They have good levels of relevant expertise and challenge senior leaders on school improvement and set clear targets in managing the performance of the headteacher and staff, making sure teachers' pay increases are linked to competence. They ensure statutory requirements are met, including for safeguarding. They make careful financial decisions, ensuring that funding from the pupil premium is used well in supporting those pupils who qualify.
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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	123424
Local authority	Shropshire
Inspection number	402160

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	229
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Rachel Roland
Headteacher	John Turnock
Date of previous school inspection	16 June 2010
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