

# Shephalbury Park Primary School

Burydale, Broadwater, Stevenage, SG2 8AX

## Inspection dates

20–21 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.

- Achievement is good. Pupils reach above average levels of attainment and make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Those pupils in receipt of the pupil premium achieve increasingly well. Their attainment and progress is above that of similar pupils nationally.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good and sometimes outstanding progress which means that they catch up well with their peers.
- The quality of teaching is typically good with some that is outstanding. Outstanding teaching was seen in the Early Years Foundation Stage, and in Years 1 and 4.
- Marking, which was an area for improvement from the previous inspection, is especially effective. As a result, pupils are able to make distinct improvements to their work.
- Behaviour is good and pupils feel safe. Pupils thoroughly enjoy coming to school, are motivated and eager to please their teachers.
- The relatively new headteacher has strengthened the drive for improvement and staff and parents praise her work highly.
- Leaders and governors know their school very well and their actions have had a good impact on raising achievement and improving teaching.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The most-able learners are not always challenged well enough in all classes to ensure that they reach the levels of attainment of which they are capable.
- Teachers do not have a clear grasp of the requirements of the National Curriculum at Level 6.
- Teachers do not always provide enough opportunities for pupils to take responsibility for their own learning.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 18 lessons or part-lessons. The headteacher accompanied the lead inspector in observing four lessons.
- Meetings were held with pupils, members of the governing body, staff and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors took account of the 28 responses to the online survey (Parent View). They also took into account the 26 responses to the staff questionnaire.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and examined a range of documents, including: the school's own records of pupils' progress and attainment, monitoring documents on teaching and the school's performance, records relating to managing staff performance and those relating to behaviour, safeguarding and attendance.

## Inspection team

Glynis Bradley-Peat, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Kanwaljit Singh

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The school is smaller than most primary schools.
- Most students are White British. The remainder come from a variety of minority ethnic heritages.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is very small.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is above average, but the proportion supported at school action plus or through a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- The proportion of students known to be eligible for the pupil premium (additional funding, in this case, for those known to be eligible for free school meals) is average.
- The school is part of a federation and shares a governing body.
- The headteacher took up post in January 2012.
- 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?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it becomes consistently good and a larger proportion becomes outstanding by ensuring that:
  - teachers have the highest expectations of all pupils, particularly the most-able learners, so that they are consistently challenged throughout lessons to achieve their very best
  - information about pupils' existing levels of attainment is used to pitch the starting point of lessons so that all pupils make good progress from the beginning
  - pupils develop their independence fully and that they take increasing responsibility for their own learning.
- Raise the attainment of the most-able pupils by ensuring that:
  - teachers fully understand what is required for pupils to gain level 6 in reading, writing and mathematics
  - tasks and activities are matched exactly to the needs of the most-able pupils in all classes.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is good

- Children enter the Nursery with levels of knowledge and skills that are below those typically found for their age. Their skills are relatively weaker in language and literacy. They make good progress during their time in the Early Years Foundation Stage and enter Year 1 with broadly average attainment.
- Pupils' attainment remains broadly average by the time they reach the end of Key Stage 1 but this is because until recently, teaching was less effective. This affected the progress of Year 2 pupils in particular. However, by the end of Year 6 pupils reach above average standards.
- Progress across the school is now good in reading, writing and mathematics. The proportion of pupils making and exceeding expected progress is above average. The school has been successful in improving rates of progress, particularly in writing.
- Minority ethnic pupils and those who speak English as an additional language, although low in number, achieve as well and sometimes better than their peers.
- Although most pupils in Year 2 know their letter sounds very well, they achieved below national expectations in their Year 1 national screening test. A few pupils did not read as well as they usually do during the test.
- There is a clear focus on developing pupils' reading skills. Pupils say that they enjoy reading and are keen to read their own writing out loud. They choose their own books and can re-tell what they have read very well.
- Writing skills are developing well. Pupils in Year 1 worked diligently on their information texts using their 'steps to success' to ensure they hadn't forgotten anything. They worked with high levels of confidence and independence.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs also make good progress and a high proportion catch up successfully with their peers. This is because their needs are identified early and good quality support is put in place to promote rapid learning. Year 6 pupils benefit from focused mathematics sessions which challenge them well.
- Pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals achieve well. There is no attainment gap between them and their peers. In addition, this group perform better than all pupils nationally. They make consistently good progress in English and mathematics.
- Sometimes, progress is as expected rather than good for the more-able pupils because they are not challenged consistently throughout lessons. This is because a few teachers do not always pitch work at the correct level at the start of lessons and the most able are left marking time. Teachers do not always have a clear understanding of how pupils can reach the highest levels of attainment (National Curriculum Level 6).
- Raising attainment and speeding up progress has been a focus of the two schools in the federation. There has been checking of National Curriculum levels across both schools to ensure that judgements teachers make about the levels pupils have reached, particularly in writing, are more accurate. This has helped to ensure that the school is clear about the amount of progress pupils make.

**The quality of teaching is good**

- Lessons are well planned and teachers prepare exciting activities to make learning engaging and enjoyable. A less-able group in Year 6 practised counting backwards to the number of bubbles blown by the teacher. In Year 4 literacy, pupils read aloud and went on to role play their characters.
- Some teaching is outstanding, particularly in the Early Years Foundation Stage, Years 1 and 4. This promotes outstanding progress. Phonics (the sounds that letters make) is taught particularly well in Nursery and Reception. This ensures that children make a good start with their reading and writing.
- In classes where teaching is consistently good or better, all pupils make rapid gains in their learning from their starting points. This is because teachers match work well to pupils' abilities. However, in a few classes this is not always the case for the most-able learners.
- Pupils are generally expected to be independent and to think and make decisions for themselves. In Year 1 literacy, different pupils had different prompt sheets to help them with their writing. When they were stuck, they asked each other for help or went to find information around the classroom to move them on. In a few classes, pupils are too dependent on their teacher. At times, teachers talk for too long which does not leave enough time for pupils to work on their own.
- The teaching of reading, writing and mathematics happens daily. In addition, teachers make the most of opportunities to include the development of these skills in other subjects or in topic work.
- Questioning is used well to check pupils' understanding and teachers make sure that all pupils prepare answers to questions. Teachers ask particular pupils questions based on their ability.
- Not enough is always expected of the most-able learners. More difficult tasks are not always given to them quickly enough. Sometimes, they are expected to complete too much easy work before being provided with an extension activity. This adversely affects the amount of progress they make.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are supported well with work at the right level of difficulty. Most teaching assistants promote good learning in planned group work. This enables pupils to make good progress. Those pupils eligible for the pupil premium are challenged well in class and work is well adapted to meet their needs.
- Teachers mark exercise books well. They follow the school marking and feedback policy and pupils are aware of what went well and what could have been done better. Pupils clearly read their teachers' comments and put into action the points raised. This helps them to improve their work the next time.
- The federation has provided opportunities for individual teachers and, at times, the whole staff to discuss teaching and learning. There have been planned opportunities across both schools for individuals to share good practice.

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

- Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. They understand the behaviour policy and procedures and most take responsibility for their own behaviour. They say that behaviour has improved and instances of poor behaviour or bullying are rare. Pupils are aware of the varying forms bullying can take. There have been no exclusions in the current year.
- Positive attitudes to learning are a common feature in all classes. Pupils treat each other and their teachers with respect and show courtesy towards visitors.
- Pupils say they feel safe and that if they have any concerns, adults help them out. All parents who responded to the online survey believe that their children are safe in the school and staff agree. Pupils understand how to keep themselves safe when using the internet and know that 'you should have friends you can see!'
- Most pupils attend school regularly and are punctual. Those pupils whose attendance in the past was not good enough have been challenged and supported well by the school. Consequently, attendance is above average.
- Pupils in Year 6 support Key Stage 1 pupils as play leaders. They take their responsibilities seriously and carry them out effectively. Pupils recently raised money for charity but an opportunity was missed for them to bank the funds themselves.

**The leadership and management are good**

- The new headteacher has ensured that all staff share her vision for working towards making this an outstanding school. All staff who responded to the questionnaire say that they are proud to be a member of the school.
- The school has made great strides since the previous inspection. All areas for improvement have been tackled effectively. Marking and feedback are good, teachers' questioning has improved and the teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage is outstanding. A new curriculum which promotes teaching through topics is in place and is beginning to make a good impact on pupils' progress. The school's capacity for further improvement is strong.
- School self-evaluation is accurate. Leaders know the school very well and, as a result, they have identified the correct priorities for improvement. The school development plan contains clear success criteria and evidence of the impact of actions taken to bring about improvement.
- The leadership of teaching is particularly effective. The proportion of outstanding teaching is increasing as a consequence. The quality of teaching is closely checked through lesson observations which are carefully compared with information about pupils' progress and work in their exercise books. Teachers are held clearly to account for the progress their pupils make. All staff say that leaders do all they can to improve teaching.
- Teachers' performance is well managed and linked clearly to further training. Targets are set for teachers which are related directly to pupils' progress and, hence, salary progression.
- The topic-based approach to learning is developing well. As a result, pupils are gaining more opportunities to write for a purpose across other subjects and to use mathematics in science for example. Cultural work on African and Aboriginal stories has contributed well to pupils' spiritual,

moral, social and cultural development.

- Pupil premium money is spent well. There are a number of small group initiatives and one-to-one tuition in mathematics to ensure these pupils make the same progress as their peers. There is no performance gap evident in the school.
- The school promotes equal opportunities well. It ensures that all groups of pupils achieve well. There is no discrimination and positive relationships are a strong feature of the school.
- The school and local authority work well together in partnership. The School Improvement Partner sets challenging and clear targets which the school meet. The work of consultants with the subject leaders has ensured that the leadership and management of individual subjects have improved. Literacy and mathematics leaders from both schools in the federation work together to plan and to share good practice. This has developed expertise more quickly.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governors look closely at information about pupils' attainment and progress and understand what it shows. They are clear about the school's relative weaknesses and know what is being done to tackle them. More recently, this has been in improving writing. Governors know that the headteacher and her team have moved the quality of teaching on further and they check the quality of leaders' monitoring. As a result, they are very clear that weak teaching is not rewarded with salary increases. Governors know what the pupil premium money is spent on and have noted increasing rates of progress in particular year groups where the one-to-one support has been put in. The governing body ensures that safeguarding requirements are met.

## 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> | 135084        |
| <b>Local authority</b>         | Hertfordshire |
| <b>Inspection number</b>       | 406583        |

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> | 223                                |
| <b>Appropriate authority</b>               | The governing body                 |
| <b>Chair</b>                               | John Gardner                       |
| <b>Headteacher</b>                         | Chelsea Atkins                     |
| <b>Date of previous school inspection</b>  | 19 October 2010                    |
| <b>Telephone number</b>                    | 01438 235454                       |
| <b>Fax number</b>                          | 01438 235757                       |
| <b>Email address</b>                       | admin@shephalburypark.herts.sch.uk |

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