

Sherard Primary School

Grange Drive, Melton Mowbray, LE13 1HA

Inspection dates 17–18 April 2013

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Achievement is good throughout the school, including in mathematics and English. The improvements in teaching and the many exciting learning opportunities pupils have mean achievement is sometimes even better, particularly in writing.
- Teaching is now good and sometimes outstanding because leaders, including the governing body, check on its quality very well and hold staff to account for pupils' progress. They put highly effective support in place where improvement is necessary.
- Outstanding leadership by the headteacher and his senior leadership team has made the school a dynamic place to learn and is inspiring staff and pupils to do their very best at all times.
- Pupils from within the resource base and others who are disabled and/or have special educational needs also make at least good progress because the school includes them very well indeed.
- Behaviour and safety and pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are excellent. Pupils say 'We are all different, but we all get on and help each other. We can't wait to see what we will learn each day.'
- Almost all governors have been changed since the last inspection. However they have been well trained and have got on with the job, challenging and supporting the senior leadership very well indeed. They provide excellent financial and strategic leadership.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Sometimes opportunities are lost to challenge everyone to work things out for themselves and apply their learning in practical situations and as independently as possible.
- Marking in books does not always tell pupils what they can do to improve even more.
- Not all teachers check consistently in lessons on the understanding and learning of the different groups and so occasionally pupils do not learn as much as they could.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 16 lessons, almost all of which were jointly observed with the school's leadership team. In addition they made several short visits to classes throughout the school.
- Inspectors held meetings with pupils, senior leaders and members of the governing body and discussions by telephone with local authority representatives.
- The inspection team observed the school's work and looked at a number of documents including: the school's self-evaluation and planning for improvement; the data the school keeps on pupils' current progress and achievement; case studies of representative pupils, records about behaviour and attendance and the school's policies and practice such as those relating to keeping the pupils safe.
- They took account of 37 responses to the on-line survey Parent View and letters from parents. They also talked with parents as they brought their children to school or the different clubs. They analysed 29 staff questionnaires.
- Inspectors heard pupils read, talked with them about their learning and scrutinised their books.

Inspection team

Susan Lewis, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Patricia Underwood

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Sherard Primary is an average-sized primary school. Most pupils are White British and the proportion of pupils from other ethnic backgrounds or who speak English as an additional language is low.
- A lower proportion of pupils are eligible for the pupil premium than in other schools nationally. (These are additional funds given to schools to be used for those in receipt of free school meals and other groups).
- The school has specially resourced provision for pupils with special educational needs. This provides currently for 32 pupils aged from 4 to 11 years who have moderate or severe learning difficulties and sometimes profound, multiple learning difficulties. Often these pupils have other needs such as medical or sensory needs. Almost all of these pupils have a statement of special educational needs or are in the process of assessment for one. In addition six other pupils have statements of special educational needs.
- This means that although the proportion of pupils who are at school action plus is high, at over 21%, the proportion of these who have a statement of special educational needs is very high, at almost 15%.
- The proportion of pupils supported by school action is broadly average.
- The percentage of pupils who enter the school later on in their primary education than usual is increasing.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- Since its last inspection the school has had a new headteacher and leadership team, and almost all members of the governing body including the Chair are new. At the time of the new headteacher's appointment the school had spent more money than it was receiving, mainly stemming from staffing difficulties and staff illness.
- The school runs a breakfast club.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching by:
 - ensuring teachers and other adults check regularly on how well pupils are understanding and adapt the work and pace according to what they find out to make sure all pupils are challenged
 - extending the very strong practice in marking in some year groups and in English to all subjects.
- Develop further the opportunities pupils have to use and apply their investigative and problem solving skills in practical ways.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils enter the school with skills and abilities lower and sometimes considerably lower than those of others of their age, particularly in communication and language. When they leave the school, their skills are broadly average. Improvements in the teaching of English and mathematics mean that a higher proportion of pupils lower down the school are making rapid progress and the school's standards are improving quickly.
- Although in the past there were fewer pupils achieving the higher levels in English and mathematics compared with others of their age, this is improving throughout the school. A higher percentage are already achieving at these levels in Year 6 in mathematics and reading and writing this year, because teachers are now much more focused on challenging able pupils.
- Attainment is wide ranging in some year groups because the proportion of pupils with severe and complex learning needs or who have arrived at the school late in their education varies considerably. However, all groups of pupils make at least good progress from their starting point and sometimes they make exceptional progress in a very short time. This is because the school is quick to put into place personalised learning programmes for pupils who need them, and because all are included so well.
- Children make good progress in the Reception class in all areas of learning, particularly in their language skills and their personal and social development. This sets them up very well for their next steps of learning as they concentrate and listen in a very focused way.
- Progress and achievement are improving rapidly. Pupils' progress is rigorously tracked and analysed and additional support is quickly put into place where necessary. For example, the majority of pupils, including those with disabilities and or special educational needs in the resourced provision have made better than the expected progress in reading, writing and mathematics already this year.
- In the Year 1 phonics check last year (about how well pupils learn to use letters and sounds to help them read), overall results were lower than average nationally. The group included a number of pupils who entered the school with skills below those normally expected. The school has targeted pupils with lower scores well so that they are catching up, and has changed the way in which staff approach phonics; standards are already higher this year.
- Pupils have good planned opportunities to practise their writing skills in different subjects, as well as in English and mathematics. Sometimes there are missed opportunities for pupils to use their problem solving and investigative skills so that their independence in learning is even more developed. Pupils themselves say they feel they are 'really helped to learn' when they do have the opportunity to do these types of activities.
- The pupil premium funding has been used well to provide these pupils with additional support and tuition as well as to support parents' involvement in their children's learning and access to clubs and outings. The 2012 national test results in mathematics and English and school information for the current Year 6 show that pupils supported by the pupil premium are overall between a term and two terms behind others, even though many of those eligible are disabled or have special educational needs. The gap is much smaller than usual because their progress is often rapid, thanks to the very strong support they receive.

The quality of teaching is good

- The quality of teaching is good because in almost all lessons teachers take great care to capture pupils' interest and make the learning exciting. Pupils say they look forward to seeing what is on the walls all around the school and it makes them say, 'Wow', because it looks so 'amazing'. Certainly every classroom and area of the school is testament to the interesting topics and experiences that pupils have.
- From the moment they enter school in the Reception children are aware that their teachers have high expectations of them and will do everything they can to help them to achieve. Teachers observe and record these children's learning well, sharing it with their families so it can be built on and extended at home. Occasionally there are missed opportunities to extend children's talking and learning. Sometimes adults are not available to do this and challenge individual children to take their play even further.
- Marking is used highly effectively in English and in some year groups to make clear to pupils what is good about what they have done and what next steps should be. Sometimes pupils themselves are expected to write their response to this. However, in some subjects this practice is inconsistent and does not help pupils to extend their learning further.
- The new mentoring approach to sharing targets and expectations with pupils is working well and is already helping pupils to raise their expectations of themselves. They are very clear about what their levels are and what they hope to achieve. Teachers share well with pupils what they are meant to be learning in a lesson and identify different outcomes linked to pupils' targets or needs. This all helps pupils to be sure about how they will know they have achieved successfully.
- However, occasionally teachers read and explain things to pupils that the pupils could have worked out for themselves, or give everyone the same task to do with the same starting point. This means that parts of the task are too easy for some and time is wasted. Teachers do not always check to see if pupils are learning as well as they could.
- Pupils who are disabled and those who have special educational needs, including those in the resourced provision, are included very well in lessons by mainstream staff because they plan effectively with specialist staff as to how to do so. These pupils say they love being part of the mainstream class but also know that they 'learn a lot' in their Seahorses classes. These pupils receive well-targeted support for their specialist needs through their withdrawal sessions and the help given by teaching assistants and specialist teachers.
- Teaching assistants make a strong contribution to the learning in lessons, particularly in the smaller group sessions and through the intervention work they do with both mainstream pupils and those from the resourced provision.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school is excellent. Pupils have a huge respect for the environment in which they play and learn and are proud to be part of the school community. They are excellent ambassadors for their school.
- Pupils say that everyone gets on with each other and that bullying never happens. If it were to then they are sure that their teachers would deal with it quickly and fairly. They say behaviour is excellent and has improved since the new headteacher came. They understand and value the rewards system and say that the traffic lights systems for managing behaviour really helps those who had behaviour problems before coming to this school.

- Parents and staff agree that behaviour is a strength of the school and sets the pupils up very well for learning. Staff in reception quickly establish very strong caring relationships with children and encourage them to think about and help each other.
- There are many opportunities through the school day in all classes for collaborative learning, and through the many clubs, for younger and older pupils and those from different backgrounds or with differing needs to come together and work together. An example was seen in the Hip Hop festival at which a large group of children of all ages had successfully performed. Pupils celebrated these achievements, watching the video of others with respect and awe.
- Pupils feel safe and very well cared for at school, saying that they know their teachers want them to be happy and succeed. Parents agree that their children are well cared for at the school. Attendance and punctuality are also good. Leaders are tenacious in trying to improve this even more and following up all absences.
- A strong personal, social and health education programme, visitors, clubs and visits, themes in assemblies and other subjects help pupils to understand and celebrate different views and cultures. Pupils have many opportunities to demonstrate their concern for others through charity and enterprise work and through the school council; they suggested, for example, ways in which they might support the youngest pupils in the resourced provision even more at playtime.

The leadership and management are outstanding

- This is a school that is constantly asking itself how to achieve even more. Leaders know the school's strengths and the areas it needs to improve extremely well. They have, however, had a lot to do in the eighteen months since the headteacher took over.
- Staff illness and weaknesses in teaching and instabilities in the leadership led to pupils' progress slowing after the last inspection in English and mathematics. The new leadership team has inspired staff to work hard to improve this and make up this ground so progress is now good and rapidly improving. Staff training, new approaches to writing and the more rigorous management of performance have really paid off.
- Leadership is excellent because the school has been successful in addressing weaknesses in teaching and is inspiring pupils to do their very best. This is because leaders, including governors, share an uncompromising vision, which sets pupils' needs at the heart of everything they do. They are determined every pupil, including those with the most complex special educational needs, will achieve whatever they are capable of and adjust provision repeatedly to enable this.
- The very strong focus on staff training means that new staff quickly settle in and deliver strong lessons. The emphasis on collecting information on pupils' achievements and analysing this regularly, holding all staff to account for this, helps staff to reflect well on these achievements, adapt pupils' targets and share them actively with pupils. This is accelerating progress throughout the school.
- Almost all parents are extremely happy with the school's work and individual parents wrote in to praise its work further, particularly the more recent changes. Individual parents wished they had more information about their child's progress and the school is working hard to involve all parents in their children's learning, recently appointing a family liaison worker to support this.

- The school is a harmonious, hugely inclusive community that is determined that everyone should be valued, respected and should have the same opportunities to succeed. It works very well with other agencies to support its most vulnerable pupils and those with the most complex needs. This ensures that they have the support and programmes that they need. The rich and diverse curriculum promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development extremely well.
- The local authority has provided good support, particularly to the new governing body through training and advice about financial arrangements. It regards the school as one needing a medium level of support and takes a careful overview of its achievements.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors have an excellent understanding of the school's data and its strengths and areas for improvement because they have used their training well to support this. They visit regularly and actively seek out the answers to key questions as to how pupils and staff are doing. They ensure that safety requirements are met and pupils' well-being is paramount. They are very strong advocates for the school, negotiating well with the local authority to find ways of reducing the inherited and long-established financial deficit, so that the school could move forward. They ensure that the performance of all staff is managed effectively so teaching is improved and good or better performance in relation to pupil progress is appropriately rewarded. They monitor the impact of the use of the pupil premium very well and check up carefully on the ways in which any difference between the performance of less advantaged pupils and the rest is being steadily eliminated.

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	119991
Local authority	Leicestershire
Inspection number	412668

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	245
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Vicki Enright
Headteacher	Dan Sutton
Date of previous school inspection	24 March 2010
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