

Sherwood Park Primary School

Sherwood Park Avenue, Sidcup, Kent DA15 9JQ

Inspection dates 8–9 May 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		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Pupils achieve well and in recent years have reached above-average levels in English and mathematics by the age of 11.
- Increasing proportions of pupils are making fast progress and are achieving better than pupils did in 2012.
- Teaching over time is good because most activities are carefully planned to meet pupils' needs. Their work is very carefully marked, and teachers give helpful suggestions for improvement.
- Governors are well informed and understand how well the school is doing. They are prepared to challenge as well as support school leaders.
- The headteacher understands what needs to be done to further improve the school. His priorities include raising the number of higher level scores at the end of Key Stage 2 and improving the proportion of outstanding teaching. Staff and governors share his vision and ambition.
- Pupils speak very positively about their school, behave well and have a very clear sense of right and wrong. Leaders promote pupils' reflections on behaviour as a high priority and, as a result, pupils are respectful and treat adults and each other with great courtesy.
- Provision in the school for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is strong.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teaching is not yet outstanding because pupils who are capable of making more progress are not always set hard enough work or asked questions that make them think deeply about topics.
- Pupils do not have enough opportunities to assess their own work and choose the next steps for improving their own attainment.
- While many teaching assistants give good guidance in lessons, not all adults working with children are asking the right questions that help pupils to give detailed answers and make maximum progress.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors spent over 10 hours observing 23 lessons or parts of lessons taught by 18 teachers. Additional activities included observations during break times, a school assembly and breakfast and lunchtime clubs as well as short visits to classes to review pupils' progress in English, mathematics and topic work.
- One lesson was observed jointly with the headteacher. Pupils' books were reviewed to see how well groups of pupils, particularly those who are capable of attaining at higher levels, are now progressing in a range of subjects.
- Meetings were held with groups of pupils, representatives of the governing body, school leaders and subject coordinators. A meeting was also held with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors took account of 53 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) as well as informal discussions with parents, a letter and a telephone call. They also took account of the views of the staff through meetings and 31 responses to staff questionnaires.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read and discussed their choice of reading books.
- The school's own attainment records for the current as well as previous academic years were scrutinised in addition to published information on pupils' achievement. Inspectors examined planning and monitoring documents, records relating to pupils' safety and welfare, including the school's single central record of security checks on staff, the behaviour logs and attendance records.

Inspection team

Patricia MacLachlan, Lead inspector	Additional inspector
Samuel Ofori-Kyereh	Additional inspector
Janet Tomkins	Additional inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is a larger than average-sized primary school. The Early Years Foundation Stage is provided in a Nursery and two Reception classes.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for support from the pupil premium (extra money provided by the government for pupils including those eligible for free school meals) is slightly below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is below the national average. The largest group is of White British heritage, with the next largest groups having Other White or African heritages. The proportion of pupils speaking English as an additional language is half the national average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported at school action is in line with the national average, but the proportions supported at school action plus or with statements of special educational needs are slightly below the national average. Statements of special educational needs are predominantly for pupils with autistic spectrum disorders for whom there is a special unit within the school.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school has, since the last inspection, made changes to the leadership team, with new appointments this year to acting deputy headteacher and literacy leadership roles.
- The school provides extended opportunities with breakfast and after-school clubs.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching so that more is outstanding by:
 - ensuring that pupils, particularly those who are capable of making more rapid progress, are given more challenging work by making frequent checks during lessons and adjusting the tasks if appropriate
 - enabling and encouraging pupils to identify for themselves, and discuss with each other, how to improve their attainment levels by deciding upon the necessary next steps
 - training all the adults who work in classrooms to ask questions that are more precisely targeted and that stimulate pupils to think more deeply and extend their answers.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Attainment on entry to the Nursery in recent years has been below that expected of three-year-olds nationally. In the Early Years Foundation Stage, the trend is for children to make good progress, particularly in reading and writing because of a rigorous focus on phonics. By the time pupils leave the school at 11, there is a trend of attainment in mathematics and English that is in line with, or above, the national average because teaching is good and expectations are high.
- In English and mathematics last year, pupils' attainment and progress in Year 2 continued above the national average. In addition, there was an improvement in English and mathematics scores in Year 6. School records of current progress, as well as scrutiny of pupils' English and mathematics books, show that this trend is likely to continue because targets are more ambitious and pupils are producing a higher standard of work than pupils of the same age last year.
- There is little difference in the progress made between those for whom English is an additional language and their classmates.
- The pupil premium grant is used effectively to pay for small-group activities in reading, writing and mathematics. As a result, the majority of pupils in receipt of this funding, particularly in the younger years, are now making as good progress in English and mathematics as their classmates.
- Pupils of all ages enjoy reading and receive good guidance to help improve their skills. They enjoy visiting the Blackfen library, and the school library is visited frequently by classes.
- In the special unit, pupils on the autistic spectrum make good progress developing social skills and the ability to engage because individual needs are met with great sensitivity. Academic progress is made, albeit in smaller steps, and pupils who transfer from the unit to mainstream classes integrate well because their class teachers are given careful advice and support from the specialist teacher. In the past year, inclusion leaders have also focused on increasing the rates of achievement by other groups of pupils with disabilities and special educational needs because their priority is to narrow any gaps between the two groups.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is good because strong and supportive relationships are established between all adults and pupils in the classroom and pupils are consequently keen to learn. Well planned tasks offer pupils clear opportunities to make progress. For example, in a Year 6 mathematics lesson on fractions, different groups of pupils were applying techniques to realistic problems with the aim of teaching their methods to other groups. Because the teacher circulated among all groups with probing questions, pupils were able to refine and clarify their presentations and enjoy an activity that helped them to make good progress.
- Pupils understand their attainment levels because teachers mark English and mathematics work clearly and regularly. Teachers, however, do not always help pupils to select their own next steps to improve progress over longer periods in all subjects, and this makes it hard for pupils to understand the precise steps needed to get to a higher level.
- Capable curriculum leaders check teachers' plans to ensure that sequences of lessons offer interesting tasks that help pupils to make progress. The best teachers reshape tasks quickly if pupils are not succeeding to help them to learn at their own pace. Skilled teaching assistants give detailed support to pupils who need additional help to understand tasks.
- Pupils, particularly those capable of making faster progress, are given extension tasks, but these are not always the open-ended challenges or targeted questions that support deep and extended thinking.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage, teaching is good because planning is thorough and threads a class theme through all areas of learning, so that the children have opportunities to reiterate

the week's targeted vocabulary and sounds.

- The majority of parents and carers who responded to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) believe that their children are well taught and receive appropriate homework. They also value the clarity of the school's regular progress reports that help them to support their children's learning.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils' attitudes to learning are good. This is because pupils work very cooperatively with each other and are resilient in completing tasks. Behaviour is good rather than outstanding because pupils, particularly those who are capable of making faster progress, are not always able to identify their next steps for independent working. This means that pupils are not always able to demonstrate exemplary attitudes to learning.
- Pupils feel well looked after by the adults around them. One summed it up as 'brilliant', when explaining how teachers have helped her to improve her own conduct. The culture of reflection on behaviour and a climate of mutual friendship lead to pupils acting considerately and respectfully towards each other and to adults.
- Pupils understand what bullying is and what to do should it occur. Bullying is very rare and dealt with effectively. Parents and carers have expressed satisfaction with the school's good management of behaviour. Pupils have a good awareness of personal safety, including cyber safety, and respond well when visitors, such as police officers, run programmes to help them to keep themselves safe.
- Attendance is in line with the national average because effective strategies are used to encourage good attendance among the diminishing group of families who find it hard to reduce absences. Parents and carers believe that the school provides a safe and caring environment and inspectors agree. Pupils enjoy coming to school and, as one parent of two children new to the school remarked, 'The staff have gone above and beyond in their support [and] ... have made the children feel like they have been there forever.'
- Pupils know right from wrong and there are opportunities for older pupils who act as play leaders to support younger children to follow the 'golden rules' in the playground and around the school. Lively displays made by pupils on recycling and moral questions in science reinforce moral and social development well.

The leadership and management are good

- Good leadership and management have ensured that the areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection have been successfully addressed. Marking is now thorough and teachers use assessment information to plan enjoyable tasks that interest the pupils. Achievement in Year 6 has risen. Tasks are devised for pupils with different abilities, including extension activities for the more able. There has been an improving trend in the Early Years Foundation Stage in early writing skills.
- The headteacher has developed a robust system for monitoring teaching, sharing lesson observations with curriculum team leaders who then lead school-based training. This has improved classroom practice. The performance management system ensures that only those teachers who meet required standards move up the salary scale. The headteacher does not avoid difficult conversations about teaching performance, if these are necessary.
- Provision to encourage spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is strong. Pupils reflect on the differences between right and wrong in assemblies and religious or social education lessons. Their understanding of diversity is enhanced by the school-wide theme of 'we are all the same; we are all different'. Pupils in the autistic spectrum disorder unit are treated kindly by other pupils and included in many social activities. Opportunities to experience sports like 'quick

cricket', participate in choral performances at the O2, make visits to history centres or engage with visiting actors are relished and widen pupils' cultural horizons. A wide range of well-attended clubs further supports social and cultural development.

- Leadership and management in the Early Years Foundation Stage are good because progress has been increasingly rapid over the past three years, particularly in reading. Arrangements for transition from home, for assessment and for adult-led teaching are good. Opportunities to use the outdoor environment, so that children learn while playing independently, are priorities for professional development.
- Effective safeguarding systems meet statutory requirements and policies are scrupulously applied, with governors taking an active role in training for cyber safety. Leaders promote equal opportunities and are assiduous in tackling any discrimination that may arise.
- The local authority has provided effective support by organising a system of sharing lesson observations and setting challenging targets for pupils' progress. It has also offered professional development for governors in analysing data and for all staff in promoting safe practices in using computers and social media.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- The governing body knows the standards of achievement and teaching in the school because the headteacher provides regular summary reports. Governors use these to ask challenging questions, supplemented at their meetings with presentations from subject leaders as well as visits to the school to check pupils' books. Governors have an accurate understanding of how pupils are performing, compared with national standards, because they use the data dashboard reports and some have attended training in tracking pupils' progress in the school compared with national figures. Governors understand the link between teachers' pay progression and pupils' progress because they receive summaries of teachers' performance from the headteacher. Checks are made that the pupil premium funds are spent on the intended groups because the headteacher reports on the impact on attainment made by the funds. Oversight of safeguarding is systematic and the governing body takes a strategic role by checking and monitoring the school development plan.

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	101433
Local authority	Bexley
Inspection number	400474

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	311
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	409
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Richard Wood
Headteacher	Steve Fletcher
Date of previous school inspection	56 November 2009
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