

Shipbourne School

Stumble Hill, Shipbourne, Tonbridge, TN11 9PB

Inspection dates 22–23 May 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Pupils' achievement in writing and mathematics requires improvement as it is not yet good and does not match that in reading.
- Teachers' expectations are not always high enough and the pace of teaching and learning not rapid enough to ensure that pupils, particularly in Key Stage 1 and more-able pupils across the school, achieve as well as they might.
- Teachers do not always give pupils enough opportunities to take more responsibility in managing and organising their own learning.
- There are not enough lessons that help pupils learn through active, practical activities.
- Leadership and management are not fully established as the school does not currently have a full-time headteacher, and this reduces the impact on school improvement and pupils' achievement.

The school has the following strengths

- Standards in reading are good, and pupils make good progress in developing phonic skills (linking sounds and letters) and develop as fluent, confident readers who enjoy reading.
- Progress has started to improve across the school, especially in Years 5 and 6, where there is strong teaching.
- Pupils behave well and are polite, friendly and caring. They enjoy coming to school, as shown in their high attendance rates, and appreciate the family atmosphere where they feel safe and secure.
- The interim headteachers have worked extremely effectively in a limited amount of time, resulting in improved teaching and progress.
- The governing body has provided stability throughout changes in leadership and is committed to school improvement. Its work has sustained the confidence and support of parents and carers throughout the year.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed seven lessons, including some joint observations with the interim headteachers. In addition, the inspector talked to pupils about their work and listened to some of them read.
- Discussions were held with the interim headteachers, other staff with key leadership responsibilities, groups of pupils, members of the governing body and the local authority senior improvement adviser.
- The inspector observed the school's work and looked at a range of documents including the school's assessment of its own performance, the school improvement plan, records of pupils' progress, monitoring information and the safeguarding procedures.
- The inspector took account of 28 responses to the online Parent View survey, as well as the school's own survey of parents and eight questionnaires returned by staff.

Inspection team

Margaret Coussins, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Shipbourne is much smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- Most pupils are White British.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported through school action is above average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- The school does not meet the current government floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- The proportion of pupils for whom the school receives additional funding (the pupil premium), because they are known to be eligible for free school meals, are in the care of the local authority or are children of service families, was well below average in 2012. There are currently no pupils in the school from any of these three groups.
- Pupils are taught in three classes in the mornings. Reception children and Year 1 and Year 2 pupils are taught together in one class, Years 3 and 4 and Years 5 and 6 in the other two. In the afternoons, Years 3 to 6 are taught together in one class.
- From September 2012 to April 2013, the school was led by an acting headteacher. At the time of the inspection, the headteacher and deputy headteacher of a local school were leading the school on a part-time basis, providing leadership for 50% of the week between them. The governors have appointed a new permanent headteacher who takes up her post in September 2013.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching so that it is consistently good or better by ensuring that:
 - there is a faster pace to teaching and learning
 - teachers have consistently high expectations of what pupils can achieve, particularly in Key Stage 1 and for more-able pupils across the school
 - there are more lessons that provide pupils with active, practical tasks
 - teachers provide pupils with more opportunities to be resourceful, independent and creative, and take more responsibility for managing their own learning.
- Raise achievement, particularly in writing and mathematics, by:
 - ensuring that progress and attainment improve to match that in reading
 - sustaining the improved progress made over the last term
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to use writing and mathematical skills across a range of subjects.
- Improve leadership and management by:
 - ensuring leaders can more effectively contribute to school improvement by expanding the capacity of leadership at all levels.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Achievement requires improvement because progress is not consistently good across the school, particularly in writing and mathematics.
- Apart from a dip in 2012, attainment by the end of Year 6 is usually broadly average.
- The small numbers in the year groups mean that data on attainment needs to be interpreted with caution, as, for example, in 2012, one pupil represented 12.5% of the Year 6 group and one child represented 10% of the Reception Year. However, from their starting points, too few pupils are making good progress.
- Children start at the school in the Reception Year with skills and knowledge that vary from year to year but are generally as expected for their age. They make steady progress, particularly in their personal, social and emotional development, which is stronger than their communication, language and literacy skills, by the time they start in Year 1.
- Compared to the national picture, overall attainment in 2012 was considerably above average for pupils at the end of Year 2 and considerably below for pupils at the end of Year 6. Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, which last year was three quarters of Year 6, make similar progress to others, which means that they do better in English than they do in mathematics.
- In English, reading is stronger than writing and is a strength of the school. There has been a significant focus on reading in the past, resulting in above-average standards by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. In the 2012 Year 1 phonics screening check (linking sounds and letters) taken by pupils currently in Year 2, the proportion of pupils achieving the expected result was above average. Most pupils have a confident knowledge of phonics to help them read unfamiliar words. By the time they reach Year 6, many are fluent, enthusiastic readers who can express preferences and read for enjoyment.
- The dip in achievement in mathematics in 2012, when pupils' mental mathematical skills often held them back, prompted more-effective use of resources and the allocation of more time to the teaching of mathematics. In writing, there has been a focus on the development of writing skills and more opportunities for pupils' writing without help. These actions are having a positive effect on current pupils' progress, particularly in Years 5 and 6 where teaching is strongest, although the school acknowledges there is still more to do to improve attainment.
- From year to year, there are very few pupils eligible to benefit from the pupil premium, and currently there are none. In the 2012 tests, when just one pupil was eligible, attainment in English was six months above other pupils in the school and 10 months above in mathematics.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Teaching requires improvement because the quality of teaching across the school is too inconsistent to result in pupils' good achievement. There is not yet enough good or better teaching despite recent improvements as a result of the interim headteachers' determined efforts.
- The tasks set in lessons do not always provide enough opportunities for pupils to learn through active, practical activities and the pace of learning is not always fast enough. Expectations are not consistently high enough, especially in Key Stage 1 and for those pupils who are capable of achieving the higher levels of attainment across the school.
- Improving provision is helping to narrow the gap in achievement between girls and boys in the Reception Year. For example, more use is made of the outdoor area since an awning and a climbing frame have been installed, providing more opportunities for outside learning and role-play activities. This benefits all children and, in particular, the 30% in last year's Reception class who were boys at the early stages of learning English.
- Teachers do not always make the most of pupils' good behaviour and attitudes by giving them

opportunities to be more resourceful, independent and creative, and taking more responsibility for their own learning.

- There are good relationships between pupils and adults and, as a result, pupils want to do well and are prepared to work hard. Teachers are caring and know the personal needs of pupils well; however, previous assessments of pupils' academic achievement have not been accurate enough to help set suitably challenging work.
- Teaching assistants generally contribute well to pupils' learning through providing additional group work or one-to-one support.
- Lessons observed and pupils' work show that the quality of pupils' work and their progress has accelerated over the last term in English and mathematics, particularly in Key Stage 2.
- Teachers usually mark pupils' work well and provide useful information to pupils about the next steps in their learning. Pupils, particularly in Years 5 and 6, have good opportunities to respond to comments, which was an area for improvement in the previous inspection.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils get on well together, and many told the inspector how much they enjoyed school and especially appreciated the small-school family atmosphere, saying 'We all know each other and we're all friends.' Their enjoyment of school is reflected in their high attendance.
- The great majority of pupils behave well in lessons, around the school and on the playground. School records show that this is typical of behaviour over time. They are polite and helpful to visitors, and considerate towards one another. Very occasionally, some pupils become distracted when activities in lessons are not pitched at the right level to fully challenge or engage them, which is why behaviour is not outstanding.
- In discussions, pupils said they feel safe and secure in school, and they have a good understanding of how to keep safe in a number of different situations, understanding potential dangers. Year 6 pupils attended a safety in action day that promotes and develops pupils' understanding of acting safely and responsibly in a wide variety of situations. They also have a good understanding of e-safety.
- Pupils say that they are not aware of any bullying but are confident that if anything does occur, staff will sort things out quickly and fairly. They understand that bullying can take different forms such as physical, name-calling, cyber-bullying or prejudiced-based bullying.
- Pupils enjoy the responsibilities they are given, such as school council members, and say that they would like to take on even more responsibilities.
- Almost all parents and carers agree that their children are happy in school, feel safe and behave well.

The leadership and management require improvement

- Leadership and management require improvement because, since the previous inspection, changes in leadership and staffing have impeded the momentum of school improvement and the impact on achievement. Currently there is no full-time headteacher or subject leader for English, which limits the capacity of leadership at all levels.
- The two interim headteachers have, however, with the effective support of the governing body, made a significant impact in their short time with the school. There are improvements in teaching and, as a result, pupils are now making better progress, and this demonstrates that it has the capacity to improve further, although it has not yet produced consistently good teaching over time or good achievement overall.
- The recent appointment of a mathematics specialist to lead the subject and teach in Key Stage 2 is already beginning to have an impact on progress but there has not yet been enough time to see the full impact of this on pupils' standards in mathematics.

- Pupils' progress is tracked efficiently and challenging targets are set for literacy and numeracy.
- Regular checks are made on the quality of teaching and learning, and support provided where weaknesses are identified. Targets are set for teachers that are linked well with the progress pupils make, and teachers know they are accountable for pupils' progress and that this is linked to pay and salary progression.
- The school's understanding of its own effectiveness is accurate and has forged a shared understanding with staff and governors of the current position and what is needed to move forward.
- The efficient management of provision for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is ensuring that they make similar progress to others. The school has correctly identified, however, the need for identification of potential needs at an earlier stage.
- The subjects taught are well planned to engage the interest of the mixed-age classes. There are too few opportunities for pupils to use their writing and mathematical skills across a range of subjects. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well and pupils learn without fear of discrimination.
- The school has a strong commitment to ensuring pupils have equality of opportunity and pupils learn without fear of discrimination, but the school is aware that not all pupils are achieving as well as they might.
- Parents and carers are very positive about all aspects of the school's work and, despite all the changes, demonstrate their overwhelming support and confidence in the school.
- Safeguarding procedures meet requirements and ensure that pupils feel safe in school.
- The local authority has worked closely with school leaders and the governing body, and has provided a range of support, for example the analysis of data, mathematics provision and on-going support for the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1. The local authority and governors have enabled the school to continue working in collaboration with the interim headteachers' school to provide support and continuity when the new headteacher starts.

■ **The governance of the school:**

The governing body is committed in its drive for school improvement, and as a group of governors agreed, it is 'a team on a mission for outstanding'. Governors have a good balance of skills, experience and expertise. The new Chair of the Governing Body has ensured that governors offer good support and challenge to the school and hold it to account effectively for its performance. The governing body has provided stability throughout the period of changes in leadership. Governors know the school well, how pupils' achievement compares with other schools nationally, its strengths and what needs to be done to secure improvement. They undertake regular monitoring activities and have created teams to support literacy and numeracy, in particular. There is a good understanding of the quality of teaching and the impact on pupils' learning. Governors are involved in the decision making to reward good teaching and tackling any underperformance. Effective performance management systems are in place to ensure that staff are accountable and targets are set which are linked to pupils' progress. They have a good knowledge of the use of the pupil premium and agree on how it is spent, for example to fund the appointment of a family liaison officer to ensure greater liaison and increased interaction with families. The governing body ensures that statutory duties are met including those for safeguarding.

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	118311
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	412047

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	57
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Nichola Gardiner
Headteacher	Pam Scott Interim headteacher Clare Vernon Interim headteacher
Date of previous school inspection	18 June 2009
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