

# Shotton Hall Primary School

Waveney Road, Peterlee, County Durham, SR8 1NX

## Inspection dates

21–22 January 2014

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	<b>Requires improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Requires improvement	3
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 do not make consistently good progress in reading, writing and mathematics in all year groups. This results in too much variation in the standards pupils reach at the end of Key Stage 2 from one year to the next.
- Teachers do not always use questioning as well as they could to help pupils to think more deeply and increase their understanding.
- The most-able pupils in mathematics in Year 6 are not taught well enough to be able to complete complex problems and achieve the highest possible levels.
- Some pupils become inattentive in some lessons and their behaviour deteriorates so that others find it hard to concentrate. Playtimes outside are often too boisterous.
- School leaders do not always use the school's systems for managing pay awards for staff effectively enough to set clear objectives for improvement in specific teaching skills, or in aims for pupils' achievement. Weaknesses in teaching and learning are not always tackled swiftly enough to make sure all pupils make good progress.
- Teachers' assessments of pupils' individual starting points and of their work are not always accurate. As a result, the information school leaders have about pupils' progress is not secure enough for leaders to hold teachers to account effectively for pupils' progress.

### The school has the following strengths

- The school is improving owing to the strong leadership of the new headteacher and the determination of the governing body. The good actions they have taken have yet to show their full impact on improving teaching and speeding up progress in all classes.
- Pupils enjoy school and their attendance is good.
- The curriculum has improved since the last inspection and pupils now have ample opportunities to apply their skills in writing and mathematics across a wide range of subjects.
- New projects are providing pupils with much wider experiences and they are finding this interesting. Lively displays celebrate pupils' achievements.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed the teaching of 14 teachers and visited all classes. They saw 20 lessons or parts of lessons altogether. Two lessons were observed jointly, one with the headteacher and the other with the deputy headteacher.
- The inspectors looked at work in pupils' books to assess achievement currently and over time and evaluate the quality of teachers' marking.
- The inspectors spoke to groups of pupils to get their views on the quality of teaching, what they enjoy doing in school and what they feel about safety and behaviour. They listened to pupils read. Inspectors took account of 51 responses from parents to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View).
- Meetings were held with members of the governing body, school leaders, teachers and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors looked at a number of documents including the school's view of its work, records of accidents and bullying incidents, the school development plan and various policies.

## Inspection team

Janette Corlett, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Karen Holmes	Additional Inspector
Sonya Williamson	Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- This is a larger than average-sized primary school.
- Most pupils are from White British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is well-below average.
- An above-average proportion of pupils are supported at school action because they are disabled or have special educational needs. A below average proportion have a statement of special educational needs or are supported at school action plus.
- The proportion of pupils supported through the pupil premium is above average. The pupil premium is additional government funding for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, children from service families and those children who are looked after by the local authority.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school operates a Pre-School group on-site which provides flexible provision for children aged three until they are ready to begin in the Reception class.
- A new headteacher was appointed to the school in September 2012 following a period of some turbulence in the leadership of the school after the amalgamation of the separate infant and junior schools.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching so that it is consistently good or outstanding and secures equally good or outstanding progress across all year groups, by:
  - improving teachers' questioning skills so that they are all able to help pupils to extend their thinking and deepen their understanding of new areas of learning
  - ensuring that teachers' assessments of pupils' work are accurate so that pupils' individual starting points are known, together with the amount of progress they need to make to reach their full potential
  - ensuring that teachers set work that is neither too easy nor too difficult for all groups of pupils
  - eradicating weak teaching of mathematics in Year 6 so that the most-able pupils are properly equipped with the skills and understanding of mathematical calculations and problem solving to enable them to reach the highest possible standards.
- Improve behaviour by making sure that work secures pupils' attention during lessons and that playtimes are managed better so that there is less boisterous play.
- Improve leadership and management, by:
  - making sure that the systems to manage teachers' pay and progression are used effectively so that all teachers are clear about the specific areas of their teaching that they need to improve, and have measurable objectives in relation to improving pupils' achievement
  - holding teachers rigorously to account for pupils' progress and ensuring that teachers intervene swiftly to prevent underachievement.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

### requires improvement

- Pupils' progress varies widely between year groups and between different classes within year groups because the quality of teaching is not good enough in all classes. This is why achievement requires improvement.
- Standards over time are broadly average at the end of Years 2 and 6 and too few pupils consistently make more than expected progress as they move through the school.
- Following a dip to below average standards in 2012, in the 2013 national tests at the end of Year 6, pupils' achievement in reading, writing and mathematics showed improvement on the previous year. Standards in mathematics were well-above average and an above average number of the most-able pupils reached the highest possible standard in this subject.
- This improvement in mathematics has not been sustained because the subject knowledge of teachers in Year 6 is not consistently strong enough to teach mathematics at the higher level.
- Children's starting points on entry to the Reception classes are generally typical for their age, although an increasing proportion enter the school with skills below those expected in language and communication. Due to good teaching, most children make good progress in this class and are well prepared for the next phase in their education. The on-site Pre-School group for children aged three and over is effective in helping to prepare children for full-time school and so they swiftly settle into the new routines of the Reception class.
- The teaching of phonics (knowing letters and the sounds they make) has improved and this is helping pupils to become more competent readers with levels of fluency and comprehension which are typical for their age by the end of Years 2 and 6.
- Pupils' progress in writing is weaker than in reading and mathematics. However, progress in writing is improving because there are many opportunities for pupils to write across a range of subjects.
- The school is beginning to narrow the gap in achievement between pupils supported by the pupil premium, including those eligible for a free school meal, and those who are not. Extra support for pupils currently eligible for free school meals is helping them to make more rapid progress, but their attainment is still about two terms behind that of others at the school by the end of Year 6.
- While the school fosters good relations among all groups of pupils and makes sure there is no discrimination, there remain some inequalities in opportunities for learning. For example, the challenge in lessons for the most-able pupils is not yet consistent across years and subjects to ensure these pupils always make good enough progress.
- Similarly, disabled pupils and those with special educational needs do not always make as much progress in lessons as other pupils because the work set is not always at the right level for their needs. These pupils make good progress when they receive support individually or in small groups from skilled support staff.

### The quality of teaching

### requires improvement

- Although teaching is improving it is still judged to require improvement because not all teachers are able to assess pupils' levels of ability and that of their work accurately. This means that their planning for learning is not always pitched at the right level for the pupils involved. As a result, teachers' expectations of the amount and quality of pupils' work are either too high or not high enough.
- Some teachers use questioning very skilfully to make sure that pupils have understood what they are learning or to encourage them to think more carefully and develop confidence as good learners. In one mathematics lesson with a lower-ability set in Year 6, for example, the teacher

asked pupils to tell the story of a line graph mapping the escape of an elephant from the zoo. Skilful questioning clarified their thinking so that they were absolutely clear on their interpretations.

- In too many lessons, teachers do not check pupils' understanding frequently enough and so incorrect methods are reinforced as pupils continue to work, rather than misconceptions being sorted out.
- Teachers and support staff frequently work with small groups of pupils because they need a little extra help or a more challenging activity to move them on in their learning. Sometimes, when this happens, other pupils in the class may not have enough work to do or cannot complete the work without some adult help. This results in time wasted and these pupils not making enough progress.
- Since the last inspection, teachers have provided far more opportunities for pupils to practise their skills in reading, writing and mathematics across a wide range of subject areas. Displays around the school provide many fine examples of pupils' written work including research around topic areas such as Ancient Egyptian burial rites, Greek myths and legends, and life in Victorian times. Science books showed pupils applying their skills in mathematical data handling. In one mathematics lesson the teacher used work on Egyptian pyramids to help pupils understand that they needed to subtract a smaller number from a larger number – using 'sand' first and then dealing with the 'rocks'.
- Teachers' marking has also improved and frequently gives pupils good advice on how to improve their work and the opportunity to follow up on this advice in subsequent lessons. This good practice is not consistently used in all classes.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils**

### **requires improvement**

- Pupils' behaviour requires improvement because not all pupils are attentive in lessons and occasionally they cause minor disruption to the learning of other pupils by shouting out in class or messing about with pens and rulers. In a few lessons, teachers do not put a stop to this because they are working with other pupils and do not always take the time to ensure that all pupils are working hard.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe also requires improvement because there are too many incidents of minor bumps and scrapes on the school yard where play has become a bit too boisterous.
- Most of the time pupils treat one another well. Pupils say that there is a little bullying, but this is dealt with effectively by teachers. They say that they feel safe in the school grounds and building and the vast majority of parents agree with this. Pupils say that behaviour is not always good but they report that it is only a handful of pupils who are repeatedly naughty.
- The headteacher has an 'open door' policy which means that she is almost always available at breaks and lunchtimes to talk to children about any concerns they may have. Pupils like this and also appreciate the weekly celebration assemblies where their achievements – both personal and academic – are shared with the whole school and they are given a 'Star of the Week' sweatshirt. Parents are invited to these assemblies and show great pride in their children's achievements.
- Attendance is above average because most pupils enjoy coming to school and most families are supportive of the school's work in promoting regular attendance.

### **The leadership and management**

### **requires improvement**

- The impact of school leaders' determined efforts to improve teaching has not shifted the stubborn proportion of lessons where teaching is not good. In around 20% of the lessons monitored over time by school leaders they judge that the teaching requires improvement and

inspection evidence confirms this. Some individual teachers have either moved on or have improved, but others are inexperienced or have not improved to be consistently good.

- A very few parents feel that the school is not well led and managed. Inspectors found that senior leaders are giving strong direction and have the capacity to improve the school further. The new headteacher has galvanised her team into action, putting in place systems and structures to raise achievement. She is building an effective leadership team with clear roles and responsibilities. Middle leaders are relatively new to their roles and, while they share the headteacher's ambition for rapid improvement towards outstanding provision, they have not had time to show a measurable impact on the school's performance.
- The arrangements in place for the performance management of teachers are increasingly effective in ensuring that any upward movement on pay scales is linked to improved teaching and results for pupils. The objectives set for improvement, however, are too general and not sufficiently related to specific aspects of teaching or to measurable outcomes in terms of pupils' progress. For example, requiring a teacher to ensure that the majority of pupils make good progress might be taken to mean that if 55% of pupils achieve well the objective has been successfully reached when this would actually represent very poor performance.
- Good partnership working with other local schools and the adjoining Academy has provided many opportunities for continuing professional development for teachers to improve the quality of their work. Plans are in place through these networks to improve teachers' assessments so that they are consistently accurate and in line with current national criteria. This will support school leaders in gaining a more accurate view of pupils' progress. The local authority has provided a range of support to the school. Recently, this has included effective support to improve the provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage and for monitoring the quality of teaching in lessons.
- Pupils' participation in physical activities and sports is increasing as the school has used the primary school sport funding to train staff and increase the resources available for activities such as football after school. This is supporting pupils in adopting healthier lifestyles.
- The school is currently participating, along with other local schools, in the Right to Respect project based on the United Nations Children's Charter. This supports pupils in developing their spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness because it helps them to understand basic human rights – for example, to healthy food, clean water, a good education and to believe in and practise a particular religious faith. The project also fosters pupils' tolerance and respect for difference by raising their awareness of the damage caused by discrimination on the grounds of race, religion or gender.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governors are well informed about pupils' progress. They understand that this needs to improve and that the best way of doing this is through improving the quality of teaching. Governors are aware of the school's arrangements for staff pay and progression, including that of the headteacher. They know that the pupil premium funding has been effective in improving the progress of those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals. Equally, they understand that the gaps in their attainment by comparison with that of other pupils in the school need to be closed and have challenged the headteacher to ensure that the steps she takes to do this are effective and represent value for money. Governors ensure that safeguarding in the school meets requirements and that the school's financial arrangements are secure. Governors are actively involved in the life of the school. A recent 'Governor Week' gave them the opportunity to spend time in classrooms, to talk to pupils, parents and school staff and to gain a more in-depth understanding of how the school needs to improve.

## 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>	135838
<b>Local authority</b>	Durham
<b>Inspection number</b>	430865

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>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	340
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Dennis Coates
<b>Headteacher</b>	Nicola Leyland
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	29 May 2012
<b>Telephone number</b>	0191 586 4515
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