

Shobdon Primary School

Shobdon, Leominster, HR6 9LX

Inspection dates

5–6 February 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	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.

- Parents and pupils highly value this thriving school. Pupils make good progress, achieve well in a wide range of subjects and are confidently prepared for the next stage of their education.
- Since the previous inspection, leaders, managers and governors have ensured the strengths in achievement and teaching have been sustained, and have improved attendance.
- Teaching is never less than good. Classrooms stimulate pupils' imagination and celebrate learning through attractive displays, encouraging pupils' eagerness to learn.
- Behaviour is good in lessons and around the school. Sometimes it is outstanding. Pupils care for one another and are courteous. They feel safe and act safely, because they are effectively taught about this.
- The inspirational headteacher leads the school well, supported by the dedicated staff. Opportunities for their professional development are highly focused on key priorities, benefiting the pupils.
- Governors know the school intimately, bringing a rich variety of experience by which to hold the school to account.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Sometimes teachers do not use teaching assistants to fully support pupils' learning in lessons. At other times, teachers try to fit too many learning objectives into a single lesson. Both inhibit more rapid progress.
- Achievement in writing is good but attainment is not quite as high as in reading and mathematics.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector saw five lessons including a phonics lesson, one observed jointly with the headteacher.
- Meetings were held with pupils, staff and governors, and the inspector spoke by telephone to a representative of the local authority.
- The inspector heard a sample of individual pupils read.
- The school's work was observed and the inspector looked at a range of documents including information on pupils' progress, records of attendance, policy, practice and procedures relating to safeguarding, and records of the school's own observations of teaching.
- Some 14 responses to Parent View (the online questionnaire) were taken into account and the inspector spoke informally to about six parents who were bringing their children to school.

Inspection team

Michael Farrell, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Shobdon is a smaller than average primary school although the number of pupils on roll has increased since the previous inspection from 49 to 73.
- Most pupils are White British.
- The proportion speaking English as an additional language is very small.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs who are supported at school action is below average. The proportion of such pupils supported at school action plus or who have a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- A below average proportion of pupils is eligible for support from the pupil premium (additional government funding for pupils who are eligible for free school meals or who are cared for by the local authority).
- Teaching is organised in three groups: Reception and Year 1; Years 2, 3 and 4; and Years 4, 5 and 6 with flexibility in forming other groupings for different activities. The numbers in some of the groups of pupils are very small and caution is required when comparing attainment and progress against these seen nationally.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, setting minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Shobdon is a member of a local cluster of schools who work together, for example, sharing training and providing support.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase opportunities for focused, sustained writing so that more pupils make faster progress and attain higher levels in writing in all key stages.
- Ensure that teachers fully use teaching assistants to support pupils' learning and make sure that teachers do not try cover too many learning objectives in a single lesson.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- The achievement of pupils is good because from Reception onwards they make good progress, and typically attain levels above those seen nationally by the end of Year 6 in reading and mathematics. Attainment in writing, although above average, is not quite as strong as in the other two subjects. The school has already made a positive start in addressing this, as reflected in the work seen in pupils' books and in the school's progress tracking information.
- Children enter Reception with skills, knowledge and understanding at levels typical for their age, except in writing which is below average. Children make good progress in reading and writing and use phonics (the sounds letters make) with confidence. They achieve well during their Reception year because they are skilfully taught and join Year 1 well-prepared for the national curriculum.
- In 2012 the check on phonics at the end of Year 1 found boys' levels were particularly low. The school provided extra support for individual pupils and small groups and in 2013 the check showed pupils exceeding expected levels. Pupils love reading and, as they move through the school, do so often and widely.
- In Reception and Key Stage 1, pupils listen and respond well to writing tasks. In a Key Stage 2 lesson about apartheid in South Africa, role play and the teacher's effective questioning enabled pupils to perceptively develop writing ideas. Recognising that pupils have not always had enough opportunities to write at length and develop what it calls 'writing stamina', the school is already taking steps to improve this and is keen to do more.
- In mathematics, pupils are encouraged to have confidence and try different approaches and teachers ensure that activities are relevant and interesting.
- The school checks pupils' progress closely, intervening where necessary to ensure that different groups achieve well. More able pupils enjoy challenging work and attend classes in another school in the local 'cluster' for activities to extend and enrich their learning. Pupils for whom English is an additional language benefit from intensive work and extra time spent on activities that promote their language and literacy skills.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs respond well to individual and small group work and use well-chosen resources that capture their interest. Pupils whose circumstances might make them especially vulnerable are helped by music therapy and the school's links with the health and other services to grow as successful learners.
- Last year the very small number of pupils in Year 6 entitled to support from pupil premium were behind their classmates by four and a half terms in mathematics, under four and a half terms in writing, and three and a half terms in reading and in English grammar, punctuation and spelling. In previous years either one pupil or no pupils were entitled to the pupil premium in Year 6. Pupils currently in the school who are entitled to the pupil premium are achieving well.

The quality of teaching is good

- Good teaching in English and mathematics enables pupils to achieve well. Occasionally, outstanding teaching was observed by the inspector where progress accelerates. The school has

further evidence of outstanding teaching from its monitoring checks. The headteacher and inspector's judgements were in full agreement about the joint observation they undertook.

- The attractive classrooms and stimulating displays make a positive contribution to pupils' good attitudes and responses, while staff convey high expectations of progress and behaviour and ensure a purposeful climate for learning.
- Teachers are enthusiastic and know the pupils very well which helps them accurately to assess progress in lessons and over the longer term. The accuracy and use of assessment have been improved since the last inspection. Marking in books is sharply focused and shows pupils how to improve. Regular and suitable homework is set which enables pupils to both reinforce key learning and find out new things.
- Reading, writing and communication skills are well taught so that pupils love to read and confidently speak in front of others. In writing, pupils have not always been given enough opportunities to write at length and with persistence and the school has recognised and started to rectify this. The school provides good, targeted support, including local volunteers to listen to pupils read regularly.
- Teachers manage behaviour very well and staff convey courtesy and respect which pupils echo. Because of their strong subject knowledge and enthusiasm, teachers motivate pupils to try hard and achieve to the best of their ability, including the more-able. This was well illustrated in an outstanding mathematics lesson in Key Stage 2, when pupils used calculations in 10s, 100s and decimal fractions to solve complex problems. The teacher's excellent subject knowledge and very effective questioning underpinned pupils' outstanding progress.
- Well-planned and exciting topics stimulate pupils' successful learning. For example, pupils in Key Stage 1 use counting strings and other good quality resources with enjoyment and try hard during mathematics lessons which inject just the right amount of challenge. In a design and technology lesson for older and younger pupils, the story of 'Peter and the Wolf' enthused pupils to plan, design and make a puppet of Peter. They diligently decided on the most appropriate materials to use.
- As a strong part of the staff team, teaching assistants make a valuable contribution to most lessons, questioning pupils in small groups and working closely with teachers. Occasionally, teachers do not always use teaching assistants fully, for example they do not take an active part when instructions are being given to the whole class. Sometimes the teacher tries to fit too much into a lesson so pupils forget some of what they are meant to be learning and lose focus.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils' positive attitudes to learning and good behaviour drive the rapid progress they make in lessons. Strong moral values and respect for others are promoted successfully and pupils act accordingly.
- Attractive classrooms, displays around the school, and the tidiness of the environment all indicate the pride pupils show in the school community.
- Pupils are eager to tell of their experiences and successes. For example, they eagerly show to adults their writing about a recent royal visit to the village. They appreciate the way staff make

lessons interesting. As one pupil said, 'They get your brain thinking'.

- There have been no exclusions for over eight years. No disruption was seen in lessons and pupils arrive ready to start work and follow the guidance of staff very well.
- Attendance is above average, having improved because of the school emphasising its importance to parents and through highlighting rewards for high attendance. The school does all that can be expected to reduce the persistent absences of a very small number of pupils.
- Neither pupils nor parents express concerns about safety. Pupils behave well in lessons and around school and at break times and lunchtimes get on with each other amicably. Their kindness to each other was typified when the inspector spoke to a group of children about their views of the school as older pupils helped put younger children at their ease, encouraging them to express their opinions openly.
- Pupils know what bullying is ('It makes you sad and lonely,' explained one pupil) but say they have not seen or experienced any. The school has zero tolerance of any form of discrimination. After deep consideration, pupils remembered occasional disagreements in the past about play resources which were quickly resolved.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils say they feel safe and can explain how to keep safe in different circumstances such as when using the internet, and being near roads. In classrooms and around school, pupils behave in a safe way, showing consideration for others' well-being.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher's strong leadership encourages all staff to fulfil their own leadership responsibilities well. Staff and governors convey high expectations for pupils' good and improving achievement and attainment. Parents speak very highly of the school and are kept closely informed about their child's progress and about events at the school.
- Lessons are observed regularly by the headteacher, while staff with responsibilities for coordinating literacy and numeracy check books and pupils' progress, ensuring that the school has a clear and accurate picture of its effectiveness. Any pupils in danger of falling behind are helped to catch up quickly. The current focus on accelerating progress in writing is proving successful.
- Effective management of staff performance ensures that individual and whole-school development needs are identified and met. The school offers a comprehensive range of opportunities, drawing on universities and cluster schools to enhance teaching and its impact on learning. Clear systems ensure that any increases in teachers' pay relate to pupils' performance.
- Many activities involving visits, visitors, and the involvement of members of the local community enrich the pupils' programmes of study, and support good progress in English, mathematics and other subjects. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered well, good behaviour successfully promoted, and pupils' safety given the highest priority.
- Although the primary sports funding was received late, the school has already delivered staff training and elected a pupil sports council whose views will contribute to the school's evaluation of the impact of funding.

- The local authority provides effective support in providing courses which the staff have attended and found helpful to their professional development.
- Safeguarding procedures meet statutory requirements.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- Governors' minutes and discussions with them indicate that they challenge the school with vigour about pupils' achievement and the standard of teaching. Timely training is well tailored to their duties and responsibilities. They have a good knowledge of pupils' achievement, including that of different groups, and take a keen interest in comparing the school's performance with that seen nationally. Focused school visits and informative reports provided by the headteacher enable governors to have a clear view of the quality of teaching. Governors know how well the pupil premium funding is being spent on extra teaching assistant time, and are aware of its impact. Through visits and talking with pupils, they oversee pupils' safety. Governors ensure that staff are deployed well and that other resources are used effectively. They participate in managing the performance of the headteacher and oversee that of other staff. They systematically check their own performance to see if they can 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

Unique reference number	116734
Local authority	Herefordshire
Inspection number	440543

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	5–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	73
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Steve Macdonald
Headteacher	Victoria Hancock
Date of previous school inspection	21 October 2009
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