

Shield Row Primary School

King Edward VIII Terrace, Shield Row, Stanley, County Durham, DH9 0HQ

Inspection dates

23–24 September 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Inadequate	4
Leadership and management		Inadequate	4
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Inadequate	4
Achievement of pupils		Inadequate	4
Early years provision		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires special measures.

- Leaders, at all levels, are too lax in their approach to school improvement and do not act with sufficient urgency to address weaknesses. As a result, key areas of the school's performance have declined.
- Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 has declined each year since the last inspection.
- Assessment of pupils' learning in Key Stage 1 is inaccurate. Leaders do not quality assure this process rigorously enough to ensure a meaningful baseline for the start of Year 3.
- Pupils exhibit significant weaknesses in their English and mathematics skills because staff are not aware of how these skills should be developed as pupils move through the school.
- The impact of teaching on progress over time is inadequate in Years 1 to 4. In too many lessons, the work set does not help pupils achieve as well as they could; consequently, too many underachieve.
- The teaching of reading is inadequate. Over time, too many pupils leave Year 1 and Year 2 unable to read as well as they should.
- Generous support from additional adults is not making a big enough difference to pupils' achievement because its quality is not checked carefully enough.
- Behaviour requires improvement because pupils often lose concentration and their enthusiasm and attention wanes when lessons are not well planned.
- Children in the early years, especially boys, do not receive enough opportunities to develop their early reading, writing and number skills. This slows their progress on entry to Year 1.
- Leaders do not provide the direction or ambition needed to improve the quality of teaching and raise pupils' achievement across the school.
- Systems to record, analyse, evaluate and report on the performance of staff and pupils are inadequate. Consequently, senior leaders' assessment of the school's performance is inaccurate.
- Governors do not do enough to hold senior leaders to account and are too reliant on the information provided by the headteacher. They do not verify what they have been told through their own process of checking and evaluation.

The school has the following strengths

- Teaching in Year 6 has been strong over time. As a result, most pupils catch-up quickly and reach what is expected for their age on leaving the school.
- Pupils willingly give of their best when teaching is pitched at the correct level for their abilities.
- The nurture group is effective at developing the personal, social and emotional skills of vulnerable pupils so that they can learn more easily in class.
- Educational visits, visitors and artistic opportunities enrich the curriculum well.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited 15 lessons or part-lessons delivered by nine different teachers. They observed the quality of teaching and learning, looked at the current standard of pupils’ work and entered into informal discussion with pupils about their learning and progress.
- A number of shorter visits were also made to sessions where pupils are taught about letters and the sounds they make (phonics) and to a group of pupils receiving nurture group support outside of their classroom.
- Four lessons were jointly observed with the headteacher.
- Inspectors listened to a number of pupils read, observed pupils around school and during playtimes and looked at a sample of Year 2 and Year 6 pupils’ books from the previous academic year.
- Meetings were held with groups of pupils, the headteacher and deputy headteacher, school leaders with responsibility for English, the early years and special educational needs and a group of governors. A discussion was also held with a representative from the local authority.
- The inspection took account of the 20 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) that were submitted during the course of the inspection. The inspectors also spoke to a group of parents at the beginning of the school day and took account of feedback from nine staff questionnaires.
- The inspectors observed the school’s work and examined a range of documentation including the school’s own records of pupils’ learning and progress, the checks made on the quality of teaching and performance of staff and those relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding.

Inspection team

Lee Owston, Lead inspector	Her Majesty’s Inspector
Paula Thompson	Additional Inspector

Full report

In accordance with section 44 of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

Newly qualified teachers may not be appointed.

Information about this school

- Shield Row is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils (those eligible for support through the pupil premium) is above average. The pupil premium is additional funding for those pupils eligible for free school meals and those children who are looked after by the local authority.
- The vast majority of pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is well above that found nationally.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above the national figure.
- The school meets the government's current floor standard, which sets the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- A nursery class was added to the school in September 2012. The early years now operates as an Early Years Foundation Stage unit across Nursery and Reception.
- The school holds a number of awards. These include the National Anti-Bullying accreditation and the bronze International Schools award.
- New leaders for the early years and special educational needs have taken up post since the time of the last inspection. A new Chair of the Governing Body has recently been appointed.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is at least consistently good and enables all pupils, in all subjects, especially those in Years 1 to 4, to be challenged in their learning and reach their full potential, by:
 - eradicating inadequate teaching and raising all teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve
 - developing teachers' skills and confidence in assessing the standard of pupils' work
 - planning activities that take full account of what pupils already know so that activities fully challenge all abilities, sustain pupils' concentration and give rise to fewer opportunities for them to drift off-task
 - ensuring teachers respond appropriately to pupils' responses to their questions so that they can quickly address any misunderstandings in their learning
 - utilising teaching assistants more effectively during whole-class and small-group intervention sessions
 - ensuring the activities children choose for themselves in the early years are sufficiently challenging, especially for boys and those that are most able, so that children make a more rapid start to their learning.
- Address the weaknesses in pupils' reading, writing and mathematics skills, particularly in the early years and Years 1 to 4, so that pupils across the school make at least good progress, by:
 - improving the school's approach to the teaching of phonics so that work is matched closely to pupil's abilities and new sounds are learned quickly, including through opportunities to practise writing and spelling
 - providing training for staff so they know how pupils' English and mathematics skills should develop as they move through the school
 - planning more regular opportunities for pupils to develop their English and mathematics skills in other

subjects of the curriculum

- improving the quality of activities provided in the early years, both indoors and outdoors, so that children have more opportunities to practise their early reading, mark making and number skills.

■ Urgently improve leadership and management, including governance, by developing the skills and knowledge of leaders at all levels, by:

- setting more ambitious targets for what pupils are to achieve at each stage of their education
- establishing an effective system for tracking, analysing and evaluating the achievement of pupils
- ensuring improvement plans are based upon an accurate evaluation of the whole school's performance, prioritise the most significant areas of weakness and provide measurable targets and timescales to aid rigorous evaluation
- monitoring the performance of teachers in accordance with *the National Teachers' Standards* so that they understand their strengths and weaknesses, are held to account for closing gaps in pupils' achievement and an effective programme of training can be undertaken to raise the quality of teaching
- developing the role of subject leaders so that they take greater responsibility for monitoring and evaluating the quality of teaching and achievement within their areas of responsibility
- ensuring governors provide robust challenge to leaders and carry out their own checks to verify the headteacher's view.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

An external review of the school's use of pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and governance may be improved.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management

are inadequate

- Leaders, including governors, have become overly complacent about the performance of the school so that the overall approach to school improvement is too lax. Fundamental weaknesses in the school's systems for checking upon the performance of staff and pupils mean that shortcomings are not recognised or tackled with the vigour they warrant.
- The capacity of the school to make improvements is limited. Key aspects of the school's performance have declined since the last inspection; teaching and pupils' achievement are now inadequate. Senior leaders are unable to provide an adequate explanation of, or understanding about, the decline in attainment at Key Stage 1 over recent years or the lack of progress made by pupils across Years 1 to 4.
- Systems to track, analyse and evaluate the achievement of pupils and the impact of the school's work are ineffective. Target-setting processes contribute to underachievement. For example, some pupils in Year 1 have a target for the end of Year 2 that is one year behind what they should achieve for their age, despite leaving Reception at the expected stage of development. Leaders are not ambitious enough for their pupils.
- Leaders do not have an accurate view of what is working well and what needs to improve. Consequently, improvement planning is not focused on those areas that are of greatest priority, such as the quality of teaching, and lacks measurable targets or timescales to ensure a more urgent drive for higher standards.
- The leadership of teaching is weak. Checks made on the quality of teaching are not completed regularly enough for staff to receive constructive feedback on their performance. As such, there has been too little training and support for staff to develop their practice at a quick enough rate.
- Leaders do not consider teachers' performance carefully enough before pay awards are agreed. Teachers are not held to account rigorously enough for reducing the gaps in pupils' attainment. Annual appraisal does not utilise the *National Teachers' Standards* as a benchmark for minimum performance.
- Middle leaders who have taken up their posts since the last inspection are keen to develop their roles and responsibilities and support improvement within their subjects. While they have produced their own plans for improvement, they do not have the opportunity to monitor or evaluate the effectiveness of their work to address inconsistencies in teaching and achievement.
- The curriculum is not well enough developed to meet the needs of all pupils. There is no clear progression of skills to enable pupils to build on what they already know and acquire a depth and breadth of understanding as they move through the school. There are too many missed opportunities to develop pupils' reading, writing and mathematics skills in other areas of the curriculum. However, the school does provide a range of experiences, such as visits to Alnwick Castle, which motivate pupils and enhance the curriculum well.
- The local authority has been overly reliant on the positive outcomes of the last inspection rather than an up-to-date understanding of the school's current position. Consequently, reports to the school have not offered enough evaluation of teaching or pupil performance to allow quick and effective action to be taken by leaders to rectify weaker practice. Where support has been provided in the past, such as analysis of pupils' work to identify ways forward with writing, the local authority has not followed-up whether their advice has been implemented quickly enough to make a difference to pupils' achievement.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors do not have an accurate understanding of the school's weaknesses. They have been too reliant on the overly-generous reports of the headteacher and have not questioned the content of these sufficiently or undertaken their own checks to assure themselves of the accuracy of the information they are being given. As a result, they are not aware of the decline in pupil outcomes at Key Stage 1 and do not associate slower progress made by pupils with weaknesses in the quality of teaching.
 - Governors have not been sufficiently involved in linking teachers' pay to the performance of their pupils, setting targets for monitoring the school's performance or monitoring the extent to which these are met. They do not check regularly to see if additional money, such as the pupil premium and sports funding, is making a big enough difference to the pupils it is meant to support.
 - Governors ensure that safeguarding and child-protection procedures meet statutory requirements.

The behaviour and safety of pupils**requires improvement**

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement. While the conduct of pupils around the school and at play is good, during lessons, some pupils are restless, bored and show little enthusiasm for learning because there is not enough challenge. In these lessons pupils struggle to keep their mind on their work.
- Over time, attendance has been below average. Close working with the Education Welfare Service, together with a concerted effort to inform parents of the negative impact of absence on learning, has led to improvements in the recent academic year. Figures are now closer to the national average but leaders have yet to analyse the data to reveal which groups or individuals need further attention.
- Pupils are courteous and welcoming, treating adults and each other with respect. Pupils are adamant that bullying is not an issue. Records of incidents held by the school support the pupils' view that bullying is rare. Older pupils understand that bullying can take different forms such as targeting race or gender and are acutely aware that derogatory language, such as that associated with homophobia, is wrong.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils spoken to say they feel safe and parents who offered an opinion expressed a similar view. Staff supervise pupils well at break and lunchtimes and the school is a safe and secure environment. Pupils talk with good knowledge about the risks they may encounter when using the internet or crossing the road and how to minimise these.
- The school demonstrates a clear strength in how well it caters for pupils' personal, social and emotional needs so that pupils feel supported, grow in their self-confidence and can engage more effectively with their learning. The nurture group equips pupils with the skills and strategies they need to remove barriers to their learning and allow them to work more effectively when they are taught with their regular class.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well through specific whole-school activities, a programme of assemblies and learning opportunities across the curriculum. Links with a school in Sri Lanka and the World Cup have helped pupils to appreciate cultures that are different to their own.
- School council members are held in high esteem by other pupils and value the opportunities they are given to contribute to the school. For example, they are proud of their sensory garden and playground improvements which were suggested last year. New members are eager to make their own contributions and show a depth of understanding about the democratic process through which they were elected. This equips them well for life in modern Britain.

The quality of teaching**is inadequate**

- The impact of teaching on pupils' progress over time is inadequate and this has led to a significant number of pupils underachieving, especially in Years 1 to 4. Not enough teaching has been consistently good or better since the last inspection to ensure pupils reach their full potential and achieve well.
- A lack of understanding among staff about how reading, writing and mathematics skills develop as pupils move through the school contributes to inaccurate teacher assessment and inadequate teaching of these subjects, particularly at Key Stage 1.
- Teachers do not plan learning that is sufficiently challenging because there is an inaccurate baseline of where pupils are at in their learning and target-setting systems lack ambition for what pupils should achieve. Consequently, too many pupils sit through explanations of work they have already mastered and become bored, or find work so difficult that it causes frustration.
- Teachers use a range of questions to check understanding and get pupils to think more deeply about their learning. However, they do not take full account of pupils' responses and so misunderstandings go unchallenged. Teachers are not able to redirect the flow of the lesson to address gaps in learning because they are not secure in their own subject knowledge. This compounds pupils' weak grasp of basic skills.
- The level of teaching assistant support is generous but its quality is too variable. Additional adults are not used to good effect during all parts of lessons. For example, when teachers are explaining work to the class, opportunities to support and encourage pupils' learning are overlooked. Teachers fail to plan their teaching assistant support well enough to ensure they target the right pupils, at the right time.
- Teaching for disabled pupils, those with special educational needs and the most able is inadequate, especially in Years 1 to 4, leading to weak progress over time. This is because teachers have low expectations of what these pupils should achieve. For example, the most able pupils in Year 2 were observed counting back in ones over the course of two lessons, a skill they had mastered in Reception.
- Teaching in upper Key Stage 2, and particularly in Year 6, is good so that most pupils make accelerated progress and catch-up to their peers nationally. Teaching is typically characterised by stronger subject knowledge, a clearer understanding of what is expected for pupils of this age and a greater level of challenge.

The achievement of pupils**is inadequate**

- Pupils in Years 1 to 4 make inadequate progress in their learning. This is especially the case for disabled pupils, those with special educational needs and the most able. Attainment by the end of Key Stage 1 has declined year-on-year since the last inspection.
- While many pupils are articulate, relatively confident and have a desire to learn, these qualities are not capitalised upon successfully until Year 5 and 6 because leaders have failed to recognise that the teaching of reading, writing and mathematics is weak, especially in the lower year groups.
- Although pupils' performance in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 2 has remained broadly average over time, the attainment gap to national has widened because the proportion of pupils reaching both the expected level and the higher levels has declined.
- Indicative results for 2014 show that this decline has been halted. However, lesson observation, scrutiny of pupils' work and discussions with pupils themselves do not confirm the higher teacher assessments evident at the end of Year 2. There is a noticeable discrepancy between the achievements recorded in the summer term and pupils' current levels of knowledge, skill and understanding.
- Pupils do not demonstrate a secure grasp of sentence grammar, punctuation or spelling. Work is incomplete and presentation is scruffy. Pupils' mathematical understanding is equally weak with significant misconceptions around areas such as place value. Pupils are not adequately prepared for the next stage of their education.
- Standards by the end of Year 6 are broadly average over time because consistently good teaching in this year group and a focus on the skills needed in end-of-year tests enable most pupils to catch-up quickly. Despite the good and sometimes outstanding progress evident in this year group, attainment is not as high as it should be, especially in writing and pupils' grammar, punctuation and spelling, because there is too much ground to make up and too little time to do so.
- Pupils' broadly average attainment in reading at the end of Reception is not capitalised upon effectively in Year 1. New sounds are not introduced quickly enough because learning is not based on what pupils already know. Too many pupils in both Year 1 and 2 are unable to sound out new words and this hinders their spelling. Improvements in the proportions of pupils reaching the required standard in the phonics check over the last three years do not correlate with the current reading ability of pupils in Years 1 to 3.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make inadequate progress. Many are often engaged in low-level activity, such as copying out sentences from the board, without the need to think for themselves. Work in pupils' books across the school reveals that these types of activity are common over time. Interventions are not planned quickly enough to address pupils' specific, academic needs.
- The school's use of pupil premium funding is allocated mainly to additional staffing, allowing smaller classes and a more generous level of support. By the end of Year 6, disadvantaged pupils are working approximately one term behind other pupils nationally across all subjects. They are two terms behind their classmates in reading and one term behind in writing and mathematics. Although progress hastens in Years 5 and 6 and gaps are narrowing, interventions are too slow to start and teaching assistant support is too variable to enable consistently good progress for this group.
- The most able pupils are not always challenged to reach their full potential. The proportion of pupils reaching the higher levels from Reception through to Year 4 is low.
- Information collected on the progress of different groups of pupils, including the most able, those supported by pupil premium and those with special educational needs is not analysed rigorously by leaders to drive improvement. The school's efforts to promote equality of opportunity and tackle discrimination are, therefore, ineffective.
- The primary school physical education and sports premium has been used to train staff, employ expert coaching and secure additional resources. Leaders have not gathered or analysed data relating to this use of money. They are unable to ascertain if it is making a big enough difference to pupils' health, well-being and rates of participation.

The early years provision**requires improvement**

- In previous years, children have arrived in Nursery with skills and abilities that are below what is typical for their age, particularly in their personal, social and language skills. The current cohort of children is more typical for their age. Within the first few weeks, many can already follow simple instructions, hang up their own coat and recognise their name.
- Children make steady rather than good progress over time. While the proportion reaching a good level of development has increased each year and is now broadly similar to the national average for 2013,

weaknesses persist in reading, writing and mathematics. Boys, in particular, remain below the national average in these areas and are not as well prepared for Year 1 as girls.

- Teacher-led activities during large group time are more effective at promoting children's learning than the activities children choose for themselves. While teachers plan whole-group teaching carefully to address the needs of different abilities, in contrast, planning for the outdoor environment is simply a list of resources to make available. Children enjoy their opportunities to play, both indoors and outdoors, but boys and the most able in particular are not fully challenged to make better than typical progress.
- Opportunities to extend early reading, writing and number skills are often missed. Staff do not maximise interactions with children while playing alongside them to promote these aspects of development. For example, children are not always encouraged to be more precise in their vocabulary when speaking.
- Rules and routines are established quickly so that children settle promptly, rise to their teachers' high expectations of behaviour and feel safe. Secure relationships are developed with the adults who are responsible for them. Children are ready and willing to learn.
- Leaders rightly recognised the need for nursery provision within their community. As it starts its third year of operation, the Nursery class is now making a discernible difference to children's school readiness. This is not always fully capitalised upon in Reception.
- The early years' leader has rightly identified areas, such as outdoor learning, for improvement but actions to bring about greater success in literacy and mathematics are not sufficiently targeted. Analysis of data is not yet well honed to enable faster improvement for groups of children or specific areas of learning.

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	114194
Local authority	Durham
Inspection number	449352

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	214
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Rachel Hodge
Headteacher	Andrew Knighton
Date of previous school inspection	15 February 2011
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