

Shotley Bridge Junior School

Snows Green Road, Shotley Bridge, Consett, County Durham, DH8 0ES

Inspection dates

26–27 November 2014

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

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

- Since the last inspection, pupils' overall achievement has fallen. From their starting points, too few pupils now make good progress, especially in writing and mathematics.
- Disadvantaged pupils do not always make the progress that they should. At the end of Key Stage 2, this often leads to gaps in attainment between these pupils and their classmates.
- The quality of teaching is variable. It is not good because expectations of pupils are not always high enough.
- Assessment information about pupils is not always used well to set tasks to provide the right levels of challenge needed for all pupils to improve.
- Middle leaders do not have the knowledge and skills they need to improve the quality of teaching nor to check all pupils are achieving the best they can.
- The school's systems for analysing pupils' attainment and progress do not provide leaders with the information they need about groups of pupils. This makes it difficult for leaders to check that their actions are making the improvements needed for different groups of pupils.
- Leaders', including governors', ability to check fully rigorously on the school's performance is limited by some imprecisions in the school's improvement planning.

The school has the following strengths

- Pupils are exceptionally polite and well mannered. They enjoy school, feel safe and well cared for by staff.
- Behaviour in classes and around the school is good. Expectations of behaviour are crystal clear and consistent across the staff team.
- The acting headteacher and deputy headteacher have an ambition and great determination to make rapid improvements so that all pupils achieve their best. As a result of this work since June, some aspects of teaching are improving well.
- Governors are beginning to take on a stronger leadership role. This is a result of recent training, good information from the acting headteacher and monitoring visits to the school by governors.
- Pupils enjoy and parents value the wide range of activities that are special to the school. This includes the choir, the range of sports and the learning in the woodland area.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed lessons in all classes. Inspectors observed lessons jointly with either the headteacher or the deputy headteacher. Inspectors also undertook observations at playtimes, lunchtime and in an assembly.
- Inspectors also carried out walks of the school to observe the wider provision for the curriculum and behaviour.
- Inspectors and senior leaders looked at assessment information and pupils' books to assess achievement currently and over time.
- Inspectors looked at a range of school documents, including records relating to pupils' progress, behaviour, safeguarding, staff performance, the work of governors and the local authority.
- Inspectors held meetings with groups of pupils, parents, governors, school staff, leaders and the local authority representative.
- Inspectors also took account of 53 responses from parents to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View.) The responses from 13 staff who completed Ofsted's questionnaire were also considered.

Inspection team

Carol Smith, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Clive Petts

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average sized primary school.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational is above average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils for whom the pupil premium provides support is lower than average. Pupil premium funding is provided to support pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those who are looked after by the local authority.
- Almost all pupils are from a White British background.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- There have been significant changes in staffing since the last inspection. An acting headteacher took charge in June 2014 and shares his time between Shotley Bridge Junior and Shotley Bridge Infant School. The deputy headteacher is also newly in post.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching to accelerate pupils' achievement and to close any gaps between the attainment of different groups, but particularly between that of disadvantaged pupils and non-disadvantaged pupils, especially in writing and mathematics, by:
 - raising expectations through making better use of the information about pupils' progress so that tasks build on individual starting points and prior learning
 - ensuring teachers' feedback and written comments are precise and followed up so that they lead to pupils making improvements in their work
 - clarifying and embedding whole school expectations of presentation and handwriting
 - maximising opportunities for pupils to practise key skills, particularly in writing and mathematics, in a range of subjects
 - sharing the most successful practice across the school, so that the highest expectations become the norm.
- Strengthen leadership and management by:
 - improving systems for analysing pupils' attainment and progress and target setting so leaders can check their actions are making a difference to the achievement of different groups of pupils, especially that of the disadvantaged pupils
 - making the criteria by which actions for improvement are to be measured, and the times when this analysis will occur, much more precisely identified in the school's improvement plan
 - further developing the skills of middle leaders so they can make a greater contribution to improving the quality of teaching and learning and to evaluating accurately the impact of their actions.

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

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management

requires improvement

- Leadership and management requires improvement because pupils' good achievement and quality of teaching recorded at the time of the previous inspection have not been sustained.
- The relatively new acting headteacher and deputy headteacher have an accurate view of the school's performance and a good understanding of what needs to be done in order to restore good teaching and achievement. They are taking effective action by establishing a culture of higher expectations. The evidence of their early success to improve the quality of teaching over time is seen in improvements in teaching and learning. Although these improvements are not fully embedded across the school, they demonstrate leaders' capacity to bring about improvement.
- Leaders provide good guidance for teachers on how to improve teaching and they offer suitable training. Newly-qualified teachers are supported well through their induction programme. Sometimes opportunities for sharing the most successful teaching across school are missed. As a result, the most effective practice is not embedded.
- Through more rigorous performance management processes, the acting headteacher is working with staff to set more appropriate and challenging targets for pupils' progress. This is leading to greater accountability, higher expectations and evidence of pupils' better achievement.
- The improvement plan identifies the right priorities to secure good overall effectiveness. However, there is imprecision about the criteria for measuring the success of actions taken to meet these priorities and about how long they are expected to take to implement. It is therefore not possible for leaders, and especially governors, to be fully informed about how effectively the school is improving.
- Although leaders know how well individual pupils are progressing, the school's system for monitoring progress does not provide leaders with the detailed information they need about the achievement of different groups of pupils. Systems to monitor attendance and behaviour are more effective.
- The pupil premium is not yet being used to full effect so that attainment gaps close quickly enough between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged pupils. Systems to check and report the difference this funding is making are underdeveloped.
- The school's effectiveness in ensuring equality of opportunity is not fully met because not all groups of pupils make good progress.
- Middle leaders have, only recently, been given the training and opportunities that they need to lead improvement in the quality of teaching and learning in their subjects. Although middle leaders are enthusiastic, feel valued, and that their views are respected, further training and support is needed so they can play a key role in improvement.
- The curriculum has some strengths and does ensure pupils have the basic skills needed for secondary school.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a strength of the school. During the inspection, pupils spoke of their delight from watching badgers, foxes and deer via an infra red camera in the school's woodland area. Pupils explained how this experience sparked their curiosity to search for animal tracks and find out more about these creatures.
- The school prepares pupils well for life in modern Britain through its work on the UNICEF Rights Respecting School Award, assemblies and religious education teaching. A range of responsibilities, including playground buddies and librarians help pupils to develop good social skills and moral understanding.
- The school's arrangements for safeguarding are effective and meet statutory requirements.
- The school is using the primary sports funding effectively. This funding has resulted in improvements in staff skills, a greater range of opportunities for pupils and higher numbers taking part in competitions. For example, one third of the pupils have attended running club. Some pupils now enjoy taking part in community events, such as 'Park Run' and attend 'Blackhill Bounders.'
- Parents value the school's work and show a high level of support for the school. Parents would like to contribute even more through being given opportunities to give suggestions for improvement and having more information about what they can do to help their children achieve their targets.
- The local authority has been effective in helping the school to gain a more accurate view of its performance and has also provided appropriate staff training to support the key school improvement priorities.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - As a result of the decline since the previous inspection, governors are now more aware of their

statutory responsibilities as leaders. They are showing signs of improving their performance, for example, their decision to strengthen the leadership of the school.

- Following training, governors' visits to the school are sharply focussed on important areas. For example, the special educational needs and disabilities monitoring visit report clearly identifies the improvements needed. It also gives the timescales expected and checking that actions have been carried out.
- Some governors have also attended training to improve their understanding about the use of pupils' progress data, so they are better placed to ask questions and make decisions about spending to ensure resources are targeted in the right areas. However, the lack of detail in the school improvement plan means governors are not able to fully able to rigorously check on progress towards the school's end of year priorities.
- Governors understand the importance of rigorous performance management. Any increases in salary are not automatic and are linked to the quality of teaching and learning.
- Governors are clear the quality of teaching is not consistently good and that its improvement is a high priority for the school.
- Governors' work to evaluate the effectiveness of the use of the pupil premium funding, in order to overcome barriers to learning and to reduce gaps in the achievement of disadvantaged pupils and non-disadvantaged pupils, needs further development.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school and thrive in the nurturing and positive atmosphere which is built upon excellent relationships.
- Pupils show very high levels of respect for adults and each other. They are exceptionally polite and consistently hold doors open and give way to others.
- The good behaviour and attitudes to learning in all classes and with all adults make an important contribution to the positive climate for learning. Pupils are most attentive when teaching captures their interest and curiosity. Even where activities present variable challenge, pupils remain enthusiastic.
- No incidents of poor behaviour or low-level disruption were seen during the inspection, so lessons always flowed smoothly.
- Pupils settle very quickly when asked to get on with independent activities and they show good levels of concentration and cooperation when working in groups. They move around the school in a calm, sensible and orderly way. This is achieved without the need for adult reminders.
- Lunchtimes and playtimes are sociable and well organised. This is even the case on the wet days when pupils remain inside.
- Pupils take a pride in their school. They value opportunities to improve to the school community through the school council. This has resulted in a number of developments, including the gazebo, which provides a quiet and sheltered play at playtimes. During the inspection, this was sensibly used and added to the opportunities that were on offer. Pupils read quietly, others created a comic strip and some pupils chatted sociably and explained that their next project was a pond.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good.
- Parents and pupils agree that the school is a safe place and bullying is 'not a problem.' Pupils say they appreciate staff who 'notice me' and are 'always there for us.'
- Pupils report assemblies and the anti-bullying campaign are important because they help to make the school safe a safe place. Although pupils' understand there are different types of bullying, opportunities are sometimes missed to develop pupils' understanding of tolerance and respect in relation to prejudice-based bullying.
- Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe. This is well developed through links with the community including the fire station, police and pupils' work as Junior Road Safety Officers.
- Parents who spoke to an inspector reported that internet safety teaching is 'very big' and one parent commented that 'my child, aged 7, teaches me.'
- Attendance is above the national average. This is because pupils enjoy school, there are high levels of parental support and the school's systems in this area are effective.

- Governors are committed to ensuring staff selection processes are rigorous and meet safer recruitment requirements. There is a safer recruitment trained governor who ensures safeguarding is a key part of staff selection processes.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- The quality of teaching requires improvement because it varies across the school and has not been good enough over time to ensure all pupils make good progress.
- Where pupils' progress is weaker this is usually because expectations are not high enough and activities do not build upon pupils' starting points. This is especially the case in lower Key Stage 2.
- Teachers do not always check carefully enough to find out about what pupils can already do and what they need to do next. In cases where this is done successfully, pupils do make better progress. For example, some pupils shared some work from earlier in the term where speech had not been punctuated correctly. This work was quickly followed up with activities to address this issue. As a result, pupils were able to explain and show they have a secure understanding of where to put full stops and questions marks when punctuating speech.
- Discussions with pupils and their work in books show that the expectations in upper Key Stage 2 are the highest. As a result, these pupils are making more rapid progress. This is because there are more frequent activities that make pupils think hard and apply the knowledge they have learned. For example, in mathematics, pupils were totally engaged as they tried to create a jigsaw puzzle that involved matching up improper fractions and mixed numbers. They pupils were explained 'it's hard but fun.'
- Teachers do not always model what is expected of pupils nor set the high expectations that are needed to enable pupils to make good progress. For example, teachers' handwriting does not always provide a good example for pupils.
- Tasks set for the most able pupils do not always provide the challenge needed for this group of pupils to make good progress. Often these pupils spend too much time unnecessarily listening to explanations about work they can already do.
- Work in pupils' books shows there are missed opportunities for applying key skills in writing and mathematics, across a range of subjects. Too often, expectations of the quality of writing and presentation are inconsistent across subjects. For example, writing in science does not show the same standard of handwriting and presentation as pupils' work in their literacy books.
- Pupils' books show work is marked on a regular basis. However, the impact of the teachers' efforts is not consistently effective in improving learning. Sometimes this is because the comments do not pinpoint the precise actions that will make a difference to pupils' learning. At other times, it is because pupils are not consistently expected to follow up and to act upon guidance given or the challenges set.
- The teaching of reading is a strength of the school. Pupils engage with activities that develop their understanding of different texts and love of books. For example, the class storybook, 'Stig of the dump' was enriched through den making for Stig in the school's woodland area. The pupils followed this up by writing instructions on how to make a den.
- Pupils are keen learners and readily engage with a variety of topics that develop their knowledge and understanding across a range of subjects including topics on different beliefs and cultures. They are proud of their growing confidence from learning French and will engage in simple conversations without adult support.
- Classroom assistants make valuable contributions to pupils' learning through spotting difficulties, addressing any misconceptions and modelling appropriate vocabulary.

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Although the results in the Key Stage 2 national tests for 2014 show Year 6 pupils achieved the standards expected for their age in reading, writing and mathematics, achievement requires improvement overall. This is because although the proportion of pupils making expected progress from their Key Stage 1 starting points was broadly average overall, the proportion making more than expected progress was below average.
- Standards in grammar, spelling and punctuation were slightly below average in the 2014 tests. The high priority leaders are placing on this area is evident in displays in all classrooms which remind pupils and staff of what is expected in these skills. Evidence seen during the inspection, for example, activities to punctuate speech correctly and to develop an understanding of sentence construction, shows the school is

effective in improving pupils' attainment.

- Evidence from pupils' work, observations of teaching and the review of the school's assessment information indicates progress across the school is variable. As a result of the now stronger teaching, progress is improving most rapidly in upper Key Stage 2 and particularly in Year 6. In lower Key Stage 2 is not fast enough.
- Across the school, the most able pupils have not made as much progress as they should because expectations are not sufficiently demanding. As a consequence, there are not enough pupils on track to achieve the highest levels at the end of Key Stage 2, especially in writing and mathematics.
- Progress in reading is strongest. This is because pupils are being helped to develop their skills and confidence through regular and well-planned teaching. For example, there is evident a range of activities that fostered a love of reading across all abilities and interests. In an observation the teacher and teaching assistant were actively checking on groups to maintain high expectations and to ensure pupils' understanding of texts.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are supported well by teaching assistants. These pupils are fully included because most of this work takes place in class. However, the rate of progress for these pupils are not always good. Inspection evidence shows inconsistent expectations lead to variations in the standards of their work, for example, the quality of writing produced in different subjects.
- In 2014, the test results for disadvantaged pupils show that the attainment of this group was below non-disadvantaged pupils in the school by the equivalent of approximately a term in reading, two terms in writing and three terms in mathematics. These gaps widened from 2013 in all areas except writing. When compared to other pupils nationally, the gaps in writing and mathematics were two terms and reading gaps were one term. Progress rates for this group were also less than their peers and other pupils nationally. The lack of an effective system for analysing the progress of this group is a barrier to leaders' and governors' ability to check rigorously that the pupil premium funding is making the difference needed for these pupils.

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	114037
Local authority	Durham
Inspection number	448774

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	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	159
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Maurice Smith
Acting Headteacher	Martin Bell
Date of previous school inspection	17 March 2010
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