

Shirwell Community Primary School

School Lane, Shirwell, Barnstaple, EX31 4JT

Inspection dates 4–5 March 2015

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|--------------------------------|----------------------|-------------|----------|
| Overall effectiveness | Previous inspection: | Good | 2 |
| | This inspection: | Good | 2 |
| Leadership and management | | Good | 2 |
| Behaviour and safety of pupils | | Good | 2 |
| Quality of teaching | | Good | 2 |
| Achievement of pupils | | Good | 2 |
| Early years provision | | Good | 2 |

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The headteacher, fully supported by staff and governors, has improved the school since the previous inspection, particularly in achievement and teaching. This has had a positive impact on pupils' performance.
- All groups of pupils, including the most able, achieve well. Pupils of all ages make good progress, particularly in mathematics and reading. Children in Reception make good progress in their personal development and acquisition of a range of skills.
- Pupils behave well. They feel very safe. Parents believe, rightly, that the school looks after their children very well. Attendance has improved significantly.
- Teaching is good. Teachers manage their mixed-age classes well, and teaching assistants provide effective support.
- The headteacher checks the quality of teaching and learning thoroughly.
- Despite the school's small size, it provides a good range of clubs and other activities which the pupils enjoy.
- The school makes good use of its local surroundings to make learning even more exciting for pupils, especially in environmental education.
- The leadership team and governors know the school's strengths and weaknesses well and plan rigorously to raise its performance. Successes to date show that the school has the capacity to improve further.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teachers do not make sure that pupils respond consistently to their marking and other feedback as a way of getting them to improve their written work further.
- Pupils' grammar, spelling and punctuation are not as good as they should be and there is not enough focus on work being presented well.
- Occasionally planned activities lack challenge and do not enable pupils to achieve to their full potential.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed four lessons. He also visited several shorter sessions. He listened to pupils reading.
- The inspector held meetings with pupils, staff and three members of the governing body. He had a telephone conversation with a representative from the local authority.
- The inspector took account of 10 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and four questionnaires returned by staff.
- The inspector looked at a range of documents, including the school's view of its own effectiveness, minutes of governors' meetings, the school's planning for improvement, information relating to the school's checks on the quality of teaching and data on pupils' current attainment and progress. The inspector looked at information relating to safeguarding and samples of pupils' work.

Inspection team

John Laver, Lead inspector

Additional inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is much smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- Almost all the pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is well below average.
- There are extremely few pupils eligible for pupil premium funding in either Year 6 or in the school as a whole. The pupil premium is additional government funding to support pupils known to be eligible for free school meals or who are looked after.
- There are two classes in the school. The Reception children attend full time in a class which also contains Year 1 and Year 2 pupils for much of the time. The other class contains pupils in Years 3 to 6.
- There are too few pupils in the school to report on floor standards, which are the government's minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- Due to the size of the school there is a single leadership team. Consequently there are no designated 'middle leaders' as all staff have several different areas of responsibility.
- At the time of the inspection, two of the school's three regular teaching staff were absent from the school on maternity leave, and their places have been taken by temporary teachers.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching further by making sure that:
 - teachers always make pupils respond directly to their marking and other feedback so that pupils correct their errors and can improve their work
 - teachers put enough focus on improving grammar, spelling and punctuation and insist on consistently good presentation of work
 - the activities which pupils do in class are always sufficiently challenging, so that they can progress as well as they can.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher leads an improving school well. With the backing of other staff, he has carried out actions which have improved achievement and the quality of teaching since the previous inspection. This work ensures that pupils enjoy school and behave well. He understands the strengths of the school and has planned effectively for further improvement.
- The headteacher checks the quality of teaching rigorously and has provided good support to staff, especially those who have stepped in to cover for some longer-term staff absences. Some of this support has involved effective training provided by staff from other local schools.
- Links with other schools have also provided a broader range of curriculum opportunities for pupils. For example, using facilities not available in their own school, such as science facilities.
- The leadership team has developed a curriculum which pupils enjoy, as they told the inspector, and which encourages good behaviour and good attitudes towards learning. In addition to teaching core subjects such as English and mathematics, staff offer a range of topics which have a focus on subjects such as history and geography. The school complements this curriculum with a strong commitment to outdoor education. For example, frequent use of a local woodland area develops pupils' understanding of the natural environment well.
- The leadership team has invested its sports premium funding into improving its sports facilities. Although this is at an early stage of development, this small school can already boast some sporting successes, including in hockey and cross-country championships.
- The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. The inspector saw the theme of gratitude highlighted in assembly. Pupils are encouraged to take on responsibility, for example in the school council or in devising school rules. The leadership team works to extend pupils' understanding of modern British society effectively by developing an understanding of qualities such as tolerance and respect for different cultures. Links with Australia, visits by Russian children and speakers from distant places such as Nepal develops pupils' awareness of the outside world effectively.
- The school is an orderly, inclusive community where equality of opportunity is important. It is very noticeable how pupils of different ages work and play well together. There have been no major incidents in recent years and attendance has risen. The school fosters positive relations and provides a very tolerant, friendly environment in which there is no discrimination. Pupils told the inspector that they all get the same opportunities and they feel that the supportive ethos of the school is one of its greatest strengths.
- The local authority has provided some support for the school, for example in training governors. However, the authority has a largely 'hands-off', light touch approach, because it has confidence in the headteacher and in the direction in which the school is moving.
- The school meets safeguarding requirements. Procedures are secure, staff are appropriately trained in issues such as child protection and both pupils' and staff awareness of possible safety issues is kept updated.
- The school's own surveys of parents' views show that they have confidence in the leadership team's ability to do the best for their children, both in their personal development and in helping them to make good progress.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governance has improved since the previous inspection. Governors know the school's strengths and areas for development very well. They are closely involved in the school's evaluation of itself and regularly discuss the details. Governors are knowledgeable about data on pupils' progress, so they know how the pupils' progress compares with that of pupils elsewhere. They are closely involved in checking the quality of teaching and learning. Governors carry out their responsibilities conscientiously: they are trained in safeguarding, and they oversee the process of performance management. In such a small school, there are very few monetary allowances available, but nevertheless governors support the leadership team in making sure that staff are accountable for progress. Pay is linked to the targets set. Governors are active in school, for example talking to staff and pupils. They also hold the leadership to account, such as when querying some issues raised by recent assessment data. Governors have supported the leadership team in providing support such as training for teaching that was less strong. Governors are rightly proud of the range of opportunities which this very small school offers. Like the headteacher, they are ambitious to lead the school along the path to excellence.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good**Behaviour**

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils of all ages want to learn. They told the inspector that learning is fun, and so they are usually enthusiastic in lessons.
- Pupils are particularly good both at working on their own and in collaborating with others, including those of different ages, even when not directly supervised by the teacher. This is also true of children in Reception.
- Pupils like responsibility. Members of the school council were keen to tell the inspector about their activities, such as helping to contribute their ideas on how the school should be managed.
- School records confirm that behaviour is good. Pupils themselves are able to talk about different types of bullying, but do not recognise any of these as a potential problem for their school.
- Pupils' positive attitudes towards school are evident in their attendance, which has improved and is now well above average.
- Pupils are friendly and welcoming to visitors, and have a very good reputation for their behaviour in the local community.
- Although pupils get on very well together, behaviour is not yet outstanding. This is partly because some pupils occasionally do not work to their full capacity, usually when what they doing in class is not particularly challenging, and a few pupils do not take enough pride in their work so their presentation of it sometimes becomes scrappy.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good.
- Parents are very positive about the fact that their children are happy in school and feel very well looked after. Pupils confirm this also.
- Pupils know that there are adults they can talk to if they do have any concerns. There is good supervision by adults both inside the school and in the playground.
- There are robust attendance procedures.
- The leadership team makes sure that all staff are fully aware of safeguarding policies and procedures. Pupils are also taught how to keep safe, for example when using computers.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is of good quality. It has improved since the previous inspection, as parents recognise. The leadership's records of its checks on teaching confirm this.
- Teachers usually have high expectations of what pupils can achieve. In the mixed-age classes, pupils often work on the same topics, but activities are organised so that pupils of different ages and abilities can work at a level which enables all of them to achieve well.
- Teaching assistants are well trained and have a valuable role in supporting both small groups inside and outside of the classroom. The very small number of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs benefit from this support and make good progress, as do the extremely small number of pupils in receipt of pupil premium funding.
- The most able pupils in the school make good progress, because most of the time teachers make sure that the work is sufficiently challenging. Occasionally this does not happen, when the tasks are too easy for them, and therefore occasionally in lessons progress slows.
- Teachers teach reading well. The inspector heard pupils reading and talked to them about their reading. Many pupils are articulate and both speak and read with confidence.
- Mathematics is taught well. Pupils of all abilities are making good progress.
- Teachers teach aspects of writing well, particularly making sure that pupils write in a variety of styles, including poetry and a range of fiction and non-fiction. They are less successful in ensuring that pupils become as proficient as they should be in spelling, punctuation and grammar, partly because they do not reinforce the basic messages enough.
- Teachers mark pupils' work very conscientiously, writing a lot of comments, which are usually constructive. However, although they praise pupils and point out their errors, they do not consistently make sure that pupils quickly respond to either verbal or written feedback, so that a few pupils repeat the same errors in subsequent work.

- Although most pupils take pride in their work, a few are less conscientious, and teachers do not ensure that every piece of work is presented well.

The achievement of pupils is good

- In recent years, the nationally produced data show that pupils' attainment by the end of Year 2 has usually been above, and sometimes well above, average. This dipped in 2014, because no pupils attained the higher levels, but the variations have been partly due to the very small numbers of pupils in each age group. Currently pupils are once again on track to attain at above average levels in all subjects.
- For several years, pupils' attainment at Key Stage 2 has been above average by the time pupils leave school at the age of 11. Attainment remains above average.
- Pupils read to a good standard. Many read fluently and accurately. They keep records of their reading and write reviews. They talk willingly about the books they like.
- Pupils attain well in mathematics, showing a good ability to carry out problem-solving activities. Early on in the school, they make good progress in learning the basics of counting.
- Most pupils write to a good standard in all year groups. They write in a variety of styles. They write well not just in English lessons but also in other subjects, for example when writing up experiments in science.
- The most able pupils attain at above or well above the national average in all subjects. There are no significant differences in the achievement of boys and girls.
- There are hardly any disadvantaged pupils in receipt of pupil premium funding, or disabled pupils or pupils with special educational needs. It is not possible to comment on results in national tests for disadvantaged pupils due to these very small numbers. These very few pupils are supported well and achieve well, making progress at least at a similar rate to other pupils and often at a faster rate than pupils nationally.
- Achievement is not outstanding, mainly because although progress in writing is good overall, it is not as good as it could be. Occasionally older most able pupils, in particular, do not do activities which would allow them to develop their skills and knowledge as quickly as they should. Also, the standard of presentation of work in books is not always high enough, and some pupils do not reach the standard they should in the accuracy of their spelling, punctuation and grammar.
- Parents believe that their pupils make good progress throughout the school, and the inspector agreed.

The early years provision is good

- The small numbers of children in Reception achieve well, and have done over time, although the very small groups of children in the early years do change in ability from year to year. By the time they leave Reception, most children are making progress at least in line with expectations for their age group, and often above.
- The evidence of the inspection, seen not just in lessons but also in their learning journals, show that the children make rapid progress in developing early writing skills as well as numeracy and reading skills. They learn new vocabulary quickly. Children also make considerable strides in their personal development, quickly learning the routines and expectations of behaviour in class. They are well prepared for Year 1, partly because they often work alongside older pupils already.
- A noticeable feature of the early years is how well the children integrate with pupils in Years 1 and 2, working happily and productively alongside them for part of the school day, as well as doing some activities by themselves. They also collaborate effectively. This was particularly noticeable during the inspection, when Reception children joined with other pupils to enjoy a range of activities celebrating World Book Day. These included making artefacts, making music and doing artwork, all related to books they had read.
- Children behave well and feel very safe in school. They quickly develop confidence, for example readily talking to visitors about their work.
- There is good teaching in the early years. Staff are well aware of the children's needs, and activities are stimulating and help them to progress quickly. Children make excellent progress in phonics (learning letters and the sounds they make); they are able to recognise some quite challenging words and use them to construct meaningful sentences. There are stimulating classroom displays, such as 'Wild about Writing'. Staff assess the children's progress accurately and use the information to provide further appropriate activities. Just occasionally, when working alongside older pupils, children find the work quite difficult, so

that they do not learn as effectively.

- Leadership of the early years is good. The learning environment is stimulating and managed well. The school has developed good links with parents, who support children's learning at home well.
- Parents are rightly pleased with the progress their children make in Reception.

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

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| Unique reference number | 113167 |
| Local authority | Devon |
| Inspection number | 449584 |

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

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| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Community |
| Age range of pupils | 4–11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 47 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Joanna Gay |
| Headteacher | Simon Allen |
| Date of previous school inspection | 27–28 January 2010 |
| Telephone number | 01271850295 |
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