

Shipbourne School

Stumble Hill, Shipbourne, Tonbridge, Kent TN11 9PB

Inspection dates 24–25 March 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
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 leads the school very well. She is passionate in bringing about lasting improvements. She is absolutely determined to make the school an exciting and enriching place for learning.
- Standards at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 are above national averages in reading, writing and mathematics. All groups of pupils, including the most able, make good progress in their learning. Some pupils make rapid progress in their reading and mathematics.
- Pupils' behaviour is exemplary. Pupils have excellent attitudes to learning. Pupils want to learn and to achieve to the best of their ability. They work hard and support each other very well.
- Teaching has improved considerably and is now consistently good. All members of staff form an effective team where every pupil is known as an individual. All pupils thrive in the school's nurturing environment.
- Attendance is above average. Pupils of all ages enjoy coming to school. They say they love the topics they study.
- The school's curriculum is rich, vibrant and exciting. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural education of the pupils is a strength of the school and underpins everything it does.
- Children get off to a good start in the Reception class, because teaching is good. Regular and accurate checks ensure pupils make good progress from their starting points.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. Pupils say they feel very safe. This view is strongly supported by all staff and parents.
- Leaders and managers, together with governors, are totally committed to providing a high standard of education for all pupils. Leaders' actions have been effective in improving teaching and achievement significantly since the last inspection.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teachers do not always ensure that pupils know how to act upon the advice given so that they can make more rapid progress in their writing.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed six lessons, all of which were seen with the headteacher.
- In addition, the inspector made other visits to classes, looked at pupils' work in books and listened to pupils read.
- Discussions were held with pupils, the headteacher, subject leaders and representatives from the governing body and local authority. The inspector talked informally to pupils at lunch and break times, observed them in assembly and around the school.
- The inspector met informally with parents at the beginning and end of the school day. The inspector took account of the 36 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) as well as individual communications from parents. The responses to nine staff questionnaires were also considered.
- A number of documents were viewed including the school's information about pupils' progress, and the school's evaluation of its work. Checks on teachers' effectiveness and records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding were also made.

Inspection team

Gay Whent, Lead Inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This school is much smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- Significant changes have taken place since the last inspection. The headteacher was appointed in September 2013. There has been a high turnover of staff. Staffing from September 2014 has been stable.
- Pupils are taught in three mixed-age classes. These are a combined Reception and Year 1 class; a combined Years 2 and 3 class; and a combined Years 4, 5 and 6 class. The Reception children attend full time.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage and speak English as their first language.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is much lower than the national average.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium is much lower than the national average. This is additional government funding to support pupils known to be eligible for free school meals. In 2014, there were no Year 6 pupils receiving this support.
- The school is part of the Tonbridge Village Collaboration, a group of five local primary schools.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that pupils know how to respond and act upon the advice given in the marking of their writing so that they make more rapid progress.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- In the words of a parent, 'This is an amazing school, with great leadership and a very committed and organised team of teachers and teaching assistants.' Everyone is valued in this small, friendly school and there is a strong sense of purpose towards excellence. All staff share this vision, as shown by the wholly positive responses to the staff questionnaire.
- The vast majority of parents are full of praise for the headteacher and her team of staff. Several parents asked, 'What is there not to like here?' Governors describe the headteacher as 'amazing'. All staff strongly agree that the school is well led and managed. The headteacher lost no time in addressing the school's weaknesses and making the changes necessary for rapid and robust improvement. Together with her senior leaders and governors, the headteacher is ensuring that pupils are making increasingly better progress. As a result, good teaching and good behaviour flourish.
- The headteacher's regular and careful checking of the quality of teaching and pupils' progress is ensuring rapid improvement. The school is confident in the accuracy of its checks because judgements are regularly validated by external agencies and headteachers and teachers from other local schools within the partnership.
- Communication with parents is good. Because the school is small, everyone is well known to the headteacher and her staff. Relationships are strong. The school involves parents at every opportunity to celebrate success and to address any concerns so that they may be resolved as quickly as possible.
- Pupil premium funding is used wisely to support the very small numbers of pupils who are eligible to receive it. Funds are allocated on an individual basis. As a result, these pupils are making good progress in all subjects.
- Subject and other leaders have a secure understanding of their areas of responsibility. They have a clear view of what needs to be done to raise standards higher and how to do this. However, many are new to their roles and have yet to ensure that changes they have introduced are fully embedded. Leaders at all levels focus sharply on driving forward achievement for all pupils, whatever their ability. They are determined to ensure that all pupils fulfil their potential, that they have equal opportunities to prosper and that there is no discrimination.
- The curriculum supports pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development very well. Pupils learn about other cultures and religions through their lessons, assemblies and visitors. They are very well prepared for life in modern Britain. This is clearly shown on large displays along the school corridors. Pupils have contributed to these as part of their home learning. The school actively celebrates honesty, self-respect and beliefs through its values.
- Safeguarding policies and procedures are rigorous and fully in place. These ensure that there is safe recruitment of staff and that every single pupil is as safe as possible. Most parents strongly agree that their child is well looked after at the school.
- The school is making good use of the primary school sport funding. Parents are impressed by the range of sports that the school has put into place from tennis coaching to gymnastics and running clubs. They agree that these cater for a wide range of interests. Pupils take part in netball tournaments and an annual swimming gala with other schools. The funding has also been used to increase teachers' skills and confidence. It has been effective in promoting physical development and pupils' understanding of healthy lifestyles.
- The local authority has provided effective and appropriate support. This has enabled the headteacher to make well informed and accurate decisions about the school's next steps.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are well informed. They make regular visits to the school, which they know well. They have an accurate understanding of what needs to be done next and are ambitious for the school.
 - Members understand the impact that teaching has on pupils' achievement. They are fully aware of the quality of teaching across the school. Governors have a good understanding of the targets that teachers are set. They know that pay is linked to performance and that awards are not automatic. Governors are aware of how good teaching is both recognised and rewarded. They know that any underperformance is supported and addressed.
 - Governors take an active role in monitoring pupils' progress. The Chair of Governors attends the six-weekly progress reviews led by the local authority. Governors understand how the school's achievement data compare to national data.

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

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. Pupils cannot wait to come to school each day. They are happy and enthusiastic about every aspect of school life. Pupils typically behave exceptionally well. This occurs in lessons, in assembly, at lunchtime and around the school.
- At playtimes, pupils of all ages play well together. They look out for one another, whatever they are doing. Their social development is excellent. They make good use of the space and variety of equipment that is available. Pupils enjoy exploring the climbing frame, cartwheeling on the artificial grass area, skipping on the playground or looking after the school guinea pigs.
- Attendance is above the national average for primary schools. Leaders check pupils' attendance rigorously. Any concerns are followed up promptly. When improvements are achieved, care is taken to thank parents.
- Pupils have an impeccable attitude towards learning. Older pupils take their responsibilities for being a buddy to the youngest pupils seriously. They do this in a kind and caring manner.
- Pupils work well together in lessons. They enjoy sharing information. Pupils were observed solving mathematical problems together and creating group drama scenes. All these activities led to very good progress for all pupils in the class.
- Parents say that the school is like a big family. At lunchtimes, pupils enjoy their meal together sitting in mixed age groups across the school.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. Pupils feel very safe and are happy at the school.
- Records kept by the school show very few incidents of concern since the headteacher has been at the school. The very occasional incidents are related to specific special needs rather than generalised behaviour issues. Incidents are recorded in detail and parental involvement is included as a matter of course. There have been no exclusions for some years.
- Pupils understand how to keep themselves safe because they are taught well. Even though the school is situated between two busy country roads, pupils feel safe with their secure gate and fences. They know that all staff look after them safely and well. Pupils are aware of how to keep themselves safe when they use the internet.
- Pupils cannot remember when there has been bullying of any kind. They know who to go to if there was ever a problem. Pupils are confident that any incidents would be resolved quickly by any of the adults in the school.

The quality of teaching is good

- Consistently good, and sometimes outstanding, teaching in all subjects is leading to pupils making good progress and achieving well. Relationships with teachers are strong.
- Teachers have high expectations. They plan interesting and exciting activities that motivate and enthuse pupils well. They carefully plan activities that are set at the right level for the pupils in their classes, even if in different year groups.
- Teaching assistants work effectively with teachers to support all groups of pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, those who are disabled and those who have special educational needs. They make sure that the pupils understand what they are learning and the skills they are trying to improve.
- Adults question pupils well about their learning and use pupils' answers to check on their progress in lessons. In this way any misunderstanding is quickly put right. For example, when there was some confusion regarding the difference between a circle and a sphere, the teacher used dough to quickly show the difference.
- Since the last inspection, the clear improvements made in the teaching of literacy, reading and mathematics ensure that most pupils are making good overall progress. Older pupils make faster progress in their reading and mathematics than in writing. Marking and feedback for learning are clear, although some pupils are not aware of how they respond to improve their learning in their writing. This is an area for improvement for the school.
- Teachers have put into place a rich and vibrant curriculum for all pupils. This is a real strength of the school. Visits take place every term which make learning memorable. Pupils have enjoyed going to a transport museum in Dover, a local plant nursery and to the Observatory Science Centre in Herstmonceux. Older pupils are fully immersed in their topic on life in the 1970s. They enjoy using a wide range of

resources to find out about holidays, popular music and the fashions of that era. Pupils like composing their own scores after they have listened to an extract from Benjamin Britten's *Peter Grimes*. They conducted their peers, using their own arrangements of a storm.

- Pupils of all abilities have developed a real love for reading. Pupils of all ages readily share their favourite book and authors. Those pupils whose first language is not English receive carefully planned and fine-tuned support so that they make rapid progress, particularly in their speaking, listening and reading.

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Pupils in each year group, some of which are very small, make consistently good progress. The make up of different groups varies greatly. As a result, comparisons between year groups are unhelpful. Pupils' progress is tracked closely and shows that, from their different starting points, the vast majority make at least good progress through the school. Pupils' progress in writing is not improving as quickly in writing as it is in reading and mathematics.
- Progress in reading is consistently good and, in many cases, outstanding, because the teaching of phonics is thorough and builds on what pupils already know and can do. Results in the Year 1 phonic check, in 2014, showed that pupils achieved levels that were above the national average.
- The most able pupils in the school make good progress because adults have high expectations for what they can achieve. Adults use good questions to probe pupils' understanding and set pupils ever harder challenges to maintain their progress, particularly in mathematics. Progress in mathematics is outstanding. Pupils say that the range of different activities they do in one lesson helps. This includes completing an activity on the computer, responding to questions in a text book to reinforce knowledge and increasing their speed.
- The progress of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is good. This is because their needs are accurately identified and support is skilfully provided by both teachers and teaching assistants to meet their individual needs. A range of specialised programmes contribute to this progress.
- Pupils present their work well. This is shown in all their books, whatever the subject matter. Classrooms celebrate learning across the whole curriculum, as well as the learning that pupils carry out at home.
- Overall evidence shows that, throughout the school, disadvantaged pupils achieve at least as well as their peers. As there were no pupils in Years 2 and 6 in 2014 who were eligible to receive support through the additional government funding, there is no progress to report.

The early years provision

is good

- Children get off to a good start because they are very well looked after in a caring and stimulating environment. Parents are full of praise for the way in which their children have quickly settled in, and are particularly impressed with their children's reading.
- Children make good progress from their starting points, which for the majority are typical for their age. A higher than average proportion reaches the early learning goals. They play and learn happily together. Older pupils in the class are very good role models for them. As a result, children make rapid progress in their social development. Those children who arrive with little or no English are supported particularly well, so that they rapidly acquire a very good level of spoken English. All children are very well prepared for the next stage of their education in Year 1.
- Parents are enthusiastic in their praise for the new online electronic programme which is used to generate each child's learning journal. This enables the teacher and her assistant to capture observations and record evidence of children's skills, knowledge and understanding. Parents say they are very well informed about their children's learning.
- Teaching is consistently good. The teacher and her teaching assistant work as a strong team, with high expectations. Learning activities are fun and interesting. Children learn as much indoors as they do outside. Displays in the classroom celebrate their learning from number work to writing, creations such as the 'sticky saurus' to favourite sayings from books.
- Children's behaviour is outstanding. Adults have high expectations for behaviour and they establish orderly consistent routines.
- The early years provision is well led and managed by the headteacher who ensures that children work and play in a secure, safe environment where each child is known well. There are very good systems for tracking children's progress, and any underachievement is quickly and successfully addressed.

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	118311
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	453648
Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	57
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Nichola Gardiner
Headteacher	Karen Dodd
Date of previous school inspection	22–23 May 2013
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