

Shotton Hall Primary School

Waveney Road, Passfield Way, Peterlee, County Durham SR8 1NX

Inspection dates	19–20 April 2016
Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The headteacher has inspired leaders, staff and governors to work together to create a positive culture in the school where every pupil is valued and supported to achieve their best. The school has improved well since the last inspection.
- The headteacher and governors are ambitious for the school and make carefully thought out decisions to ensure continued improvement.
- The new curriculum engages and motivates pupils in their learning. The quality of teaching has improved and is now consistently good.
- Pupils of all abilities, including disadvantaged pupils, those who have special educational needs or disability and the most able, make good progress from their starting points.
- Teaching assistants provide valuable support and work effectively with teaching staff to meet the needs of pupils, but particularly those who may be underachieving. This support enables these pupils to catch up with their peers.
- Pupils behave well and take great pride in their school. They are welcoming and friendly and show respect towards others.
- Pupils say they feel safe and know how to keep themselves safe. They know they can approach staff if they have a concern.
- Children in the early years thrive because the quality of teaching and the curriculum are good. They make good progress and are well prepared for Year 1. Staff work effectively as a team to ensure that children develop their skills well, providing firm foundations for future learning.
- Pupils have a good understanding of life in modern Britain. They show respect and tolerance towards those from faiths and backgrounds different to their own. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is strong and they show empathy and kindness towards others.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- There are not enough opportunities for pupils to write at length or in more depth.
- Teachers do not always ask sufficiently probing questions to promote pupils' thinking and problem-solving skills, including in the early years.
- Pupils do not always have the opportunity to develop the skills required to enable them to deepen their understanding and mastery of mathematical concepts.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that leaders and managers at all levels improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment further, by:
 - ensuring that pupils have increased opportunities to write at length and in more depth
 - developing pupils' skills in mathematics to enable them to deepen their understanding and mastery of mathematical concepts
 - asking pupils more probing questions to promote their thinking and problem-solving skills, including in the early years.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- The headteacher provides inspirational leadership and has transformed the school since her appointment in January 2015. She is highly committed to ensuring that all pupils reach their potential. She, and the governors, have high expectations of leaders and staff and rightly hold them to account for the quality of their work. The school's mission statement, – 'working together to SHINE' (Successful, Happy, Inspired and Nurtured towards Excellence) is understood well by pupils.
- The headteacher has worked highly effectively with staff to improve their teaching skills through opportunities for training. Staff welcome and act on the constructive feedback and advice they are given by the headteacher and are keen to develop their skills. The headteacher is resolute in ensuring that all agreed or non-negotiable practices are adhered to by staff. This is because she is determined to ensure that every pupil in every class has an equal opportunity to learn and develop and she ensures that they do not miss out on valuable aspects of learning.
- Rigorous performance management systems are in place which are driving improvements in teaching and learning. Teachers and teaching assistants have clear targets to achieve and leaders rightly check on their work to make sure pupils are making the progress they should. There are clear expectations of how leaders should contribute to making improvements in the school.
- Leaders, including middle leaders, are passionate about their roles and take their responsibilities seriously. Where appropriate, they check and evaluate the quality of the work in their subject or area of responsibility. They are able to identify clearly what is successful and what needs to improve. They contribute well to the evaluation of the school's performance and to the priorities in the school improvement plan.
- The leadership of the provision for pupils who have special educational needs or disability is strong. The special educational needs coordinator monitors the progress of these pupils carefully and ensures that they receive the targeted support they need. She works closely with the parents of these pupils and external agencies to ensure that pupils' needs are met and that parents' views are taken into account. She ensures that pupils' transition to the secondary school is smooth by enabling pupils to visit with a member of staff at different times of the day in order to become familiar with the new environment.
- Leaders have successfully reviewed the curriculum to ensure it is broad and balanced, taking into account all areas of the national curriculum. The curriculum is exciting and stimulating and promotes pupils' interest in learning. For example, pupils in Year 6 enjoyed carrying out research about Islam, enabling them to develop a greater understanding of this world religion. Pupils in Year 5 spoke to inspectors in great detail about their knowledge of the life of Mary Ann Cotton and expressed their views and understanding of the impact of her crimes. However, leaders acknowledge that there remains work to be done to improve some aspects of writing and pupils' understanding and mastery of mathematical concepts.
- Pupils engage in a wide range of visits, such as to the theatre, museums or historical sites. They welcome visitors into school and participate in a wide range of extra-curricular activities. These opportunities greatly enhance their learning and experience of the world around them.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted strongly throughout the curriculum and in assemblies. In addition, the impact can be seen through the implementation of the mission statement and developing pupils' skills as 'reciprocal, resourceful, reflective, resilient and respectful' learners.
- Pupils are prepared very well for life in modern Britain. Pupils have a good understanding of the rule of law and know laws and school rules are there to protect them. Visits from the police and fire service reinforce these messages. Pupils confirm that they are able to make choices in different aspects of the work of the school and know their voice is heard, for example when completing questionnaires or sharing their views through the school council. Pupils learn about those from faiths and backgrounds different to their own through religious education and personal, social, health and citizenship lessons and through visits to or visitors from other places of worship.
- Pupil premium funding is used effectively to target resources where they are most needed. Leaders responded effectively to the findings of the review of the pupil premium following the last inspection. Leaders have appointed additional teaching assistants so that disadvantaged pupils can be supported if they are underachieving to enable them to make the progress they should. A behaviour, attendance and safeguarding officer has been appointed and his work is valued by pupils, parents and staff in supporting pupils to attend school regularly and to improve their behaviour. The impact can be seen in gaps rapidly closing across the school in the achievement of disadvantaged pupils, the reduction in behavioural incidents in the school and improving attendance. Disadvantaged pupils are also given access to reading resources

and the opportunity to learn to play a musical instrument.

- The primary school sports funding is used effectively to provide high-quality coaching across a range of sports. It is also used to enable pupils to participate in competitions, tournaments and festivals and provide opportunities for gifted and talented pupils to develop their skills. There is increased participation in a range of sporting activities and this has had an impact on pupils' levels of fitness, health and well-being. A sports apprentice has been appointed and staff have received training to deliver high-quality physical education and sport.
- The local authority provided intensive support to the school following the last inspection and during the subsequent turbulence in leadership and staffing. They secured the appointment of two acting headteachers following the resignation of the substantive headteacher. There were regular school support group meetings, but these ceased as the school was making rapid progress under the leadership of the current headteacher. The education development partner continues to support and challenge the school on a termly basis.
- The school also works closely with a number of local schools within a partnership. Staff are able to share expertise and ideas and there are also opportunities to moderate pupils' work in order to check that assessments are accurate.
- **The governance of the school**
 - Governance is strong. Governors care passionately about the school and are ambitious for its future. They use their expertise and skills well to check on and evaluate the work of the school. They hold leaders to account effectively, as shown in the minutes of governing body meetings.
 - Governors have a good understanding of the strengths in the school and what it still needs to do to improve further. They make regular visits to find out for themselves the impact of their decisions and to see how well pupils are learning. They have a clear understanding of the quality of teaching in the school and make careful decisions about pay increases for staff. Governors receive external support when setting performance targets for the headteacher and these targets are carefully aligned to priorities in the school improvement plan.
 - Governors value the extensive and detailed information provided by the headteacher and other leaders, particularly that in relation to the performance of and outcomes for pupils, supplied by the assessment leader. This enables them to challenge leaders effectively through asking pertinent questions.
 - Governors have a clear oversight of the school's finances and the use of additional funding. They help to ensure that the school achieves good value for money. They take their statutory duties seriously and ensure that the school website is up to date and meets government requirements. They, and the headteacher, consult with parents and act on suggestions for improvement, where possible.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. The safeguarding policy is comprehensive and detailed. Procedures are known and understood by staff. All staff have received up-to-date training and everyone knows what to do should they have any concerns. All staff, governors and volunteers are subject to rigorous checks before they are allowed to work with pupils. The single central record is kept vigilantly. Leaders conduct thorough risk assessments to ensure that the environment is safe for pupils.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

- Evidence in pupils' work and leaders' regular checks in lessons show that the quality of teaching, learning and assessment has improved since the last inspection. Teaching is now at least consistently good. Staff work more effectively as a team and are sharing good practice and expertise.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge. They plan learning carefully so that pupils progress well in developing their knowledge and skills. Teachers regularly check pupils' understanding so they can address any misconceptions promptly and move pupils on in their learning.
- Questioning is usually effective, especially when pupils are given time to reflect or share their views with a partner before answering. However, questions are not always sufficiently probing to promote pupils' thinking skills further to deepen their understanding, including in the early years.
- Teaching assistants are deployed well and play a valuable role in promoting pupils' learning. The teaching of pupils who have special educational needs or disability and disadvantaged pupils is effective, with teachers and teaching assistants providing valuable support. This enables these pupils to make similar progress to their peers.
- The quality of teaching for the most-able pupils has improved and these pupils are now given more challenging work. The headteacher and a secondary teacher work closely with these pupils to ensure that

they reach the standards they are capable of.

- The quality of teaching in mathematics has improved and pupils are now making more progress. However, although pupils are able to apply their skills more effectively, they do not always have enough opportunities to deepen their understanding and mastery of a mathematical topic.
- Reading is taught well and pupils respond with enthusiasm, taking great pleasure in reading. Pupils read with fluency and expression, including younger children and those of lower ability. Pupils apply their skills of inference and deduction well and have a good understanding of the texts they are reading.
- There has been a strong focus on developing pupils' skills in grammar, punctuation, spelling and handwriting. Pupils are learning a cursive style of handwriting from the very beginning in the early years. The content of pupils' writing is improving with pupils using their imaginations well and developing effective vocabulary. For example, in a mixed Year 2 and Year 3 class a pupil wrote, 'The souls of the dead children are waking up'. However, there are not enough opportunities for pupils to write at length or in sufficient depth to consolidate their understanding fully.
- Marking and feedback are mostly used effectively to help pupils improve their work. Pupils have a clear understanding of the marking policy and know what they have to do to improve. Pupils have targets at the front of their books and the pupils who inspectors spoke to indicated that they find these helpful so they know what they have achieved and what they need to do next.
- Pupils find homework more interesting than previously as there is a menu of tasks to choose from over a period of time. These consist of a range of practical and written tasks linked to the current topic. This enables parents to support their child's learning at home. Most parents who responded to the online questionnaire indicated that their child received homework appropriate for their age.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare is good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- The school's aspirational approach through the mission statement, 'working together to SHINE', encourages pupils to do their best.
- Pupils are keen to do well and have positive attitudes towards learning. This helps them to make good progress. Pupils spoken to by inspectors said they like their teachers and that learning is fun.
- Pupils are welcoming and friendly and show respect to adults and one another. They show kindness and consideration towards their peers. For example, a group of pupils indicated that they feel good when they encourage and support pupils who have disabilities to try their best.
- Pupils have a good understanding of the different types of bullying and could explain, for example, what homophobic bullying is in detail. The school is participating in a lesbian, gay and bisexual project, which also includes transgender issues and this is doing much to promote pupils' understanding. For example, pupils in Year 6 were learning about an artist who is gay and how his views are represented in his art work. Pupils report that derogatory language is no longer used in school as pupils know that it is wrong.
- Pupils say they feel safe and know how to keep themselves safe, especially when using social media. The vast majority of parents who responded to the online questionnaire, Parent View, indicated that their child felt safe.
- Parents and pupils appreciate the breakfast club, which provides a safe and healthy start to the day, and the after-school club. Pupils enjoy socialising with their friends and participating in a range of fun activities.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Behaviour is generally good in lessons and this ensures that pupils learn effectively without any distractions. At lunchtimes, there is a calm, orderly atmosphere in the dining hall where pupils are well supervised. At breaktimes and lunchtimes, pupils' behaviour is sometimes boisterous outdoors. However, pupils mostly play well together, enjoying games organised by the sports apprentice.
- There are a very few pupils who display challenging behaviour. Leaders ensure that they do everything possible to support these pupils but in a few cases, the pupils' behaviour has led to fixed-term exclusions. The appointment of the behaviour manager has had a positive impact. Pupils are well supported and know there is someone to go to if they are struggling. They value the rewards and praise they receive when their behaviour improves.

- Routines are clear and pupils know what is expected of them. They take very good care of the classrooms and the large shared area in the centre of the school so they can learn in a well-ordered environment. They take pride in their work and look after the displays and school equipment very carefully.
- Attendance is improving and is now close to the national average. The school actively promotes regular attendance and punctuality and checks carefully on the reasons for absence. Persistent absence has reduced because of the school's effective work with targeted children and their families.

Outcomes for pupils

are good

- Outcomes for pupils have improved since the previous inspection. Pupils make at least good progress from their starting points. Rates of progress have accelerated rapidly this year across the school. As a result, pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education.
- There has been a rising trend in the proportion of children reaching a good level of development at the end of the early years and results have been above national expectations over the last two years. Boys and girls achieve equally well.
- The school has made the teaching of phonics (letters and the sounds they represent) a priority and this is evident when pupils are observed using their phonics skills well to read unfamiliar words and to inform their writing. Although there was a slight dip in the results of the Year 1 phonics screening check last year, from above average the previous year, by the end of Year 2, the vast majority of pupils have achieved the required level.
- Pupils read with confidence, fluency and expression. They have good comprehension skills and are able to predict what will happen next in the story with accuracy. They enjoy reading and talk with enthusiasm about their favourite books and authors. In 2015, more pupils made more than expected progress than nationally in reading by the end of key stage 2.
- Standards in reading, writing and mathematics are rising at the end of Year 2 and current pupils in key stage 1 are making rapid progress. This is because the quality of teaching has improved, and is ensuring that pupils' learning needs are met.
- Evidence in pupils' work and the school's own tracking system shows that pupils' progress is accelerating rapidly across key stage 2. There is a legacy of underachievement in upper key stage 2 because of turbulence in staffing, but leaders are ensuring that any gaps in pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding are being addressed quickly to ensure that pupils reach the expectations for their age.
- The impact of good-quality teaching in grammar, punctuation and spelling is helping pupils to improve their writing skills. Although there are some good examples of pupils writing at length in order to consolidate their skills and understanding, this is not consistent across the school. The content of pupils' writing is improving and pupils do have some opportunities to practise their writing skills in other subjects, for example in their topic work. A higher proportion of pupils made more than expected progress in writing than nationally in 2015. Although this resulted in a notable improvement in attainment from the previous year, leaders acknowledge there remains work to be done to reach higher standards.
- Fewer pupils made more than expected progress in mathematics in 2015 across key stage 2, although disadvantaged pupils made similar progress to all pupils nationally and performed better than their peers. Leaders have taken steps promptly to address this. They have reviewed the curriculum to ensure that there is clear progression in learning in mathematics and given pupils opportunities to consolidate and apply their skills. However, leaders acknowledge that further work still needs to be done to ensure that teaching deepens pupils' understanding of mathematical concepts.
- The gaps between disadvantaged pupils and their peers are rapidly closing across the school because these pupils are now receiving the targeted support they need to attain as well as their classmates.
- Pupils who have special educational needs or disability make good progress because they receive effective, well-targeted support. The special educational needs coordinator is ensuring that the needs of these pupils are accurately identified and she monitors closely the support they are given to ensure that they make better progress.
- The most-able pupils are achieving well because there are higher expectations of what they can achieve and work is often more challenging for them. The headteacher works closely with a group of the most able Year 6 pupils to help ensure that they reach high standards in their writing and a secondary school teacher is developing the most-able pupils' deeper understanding of mathematical concepts. Evidence can be seen in these pupils' work of rapid progress and more advanced skills and knowledge.

Early years provision

is good

- Children usually start in the early years with skills and knowledge that are broadly typical for their age, but often their speech, language and communication, and personal and social skills are weaker than other areas of their development. Children make good progress and are well prepared for Year 1.
- Children with special educational needs or disability are identified promptly and additional help is sought, where required, so that children's developmental needs can be addressed quickly. In 2015, few disadvantaged pupils reached a good level of development. This was identified and these pupils are being given targeted support in Year 1. Steps are being taken this year to enable children who are eligible for the pupil premium to receive the help they need at an early stage in order to ensure they achieve as well as their classmates.
- Children are keen to learn and participate in activities with enthusiasm. They show good levels of concentration and perseverance in the interesting and varied activities which are provided for them. They were fascinated by finding minibeasts and snails in the garden area, using their magnifying glasses to observe them. They thoroughly enjoyed their visits to the 'Dene' and talked with enthusiasm about what they had seen.
- There are good opportunities for children to improve their physical development, for example, through balancing activities. Children persevered in trying to walk along a narrow bar without falling off, advising one another to put their arms out to help them balance.
- Children develop their early writing skills well and staff ensure that they develop a good pencil grip from an early stage. This enables children to form letters and numbers correctly. Children are learning to write in a cursive style and this is of much benefit when they learn to join their letters further up the school. They are also developing their phonics skills well and this lays good foundations for future reading. Children were keen to learn the 'tricky' words and were able to identify these clearly in sentences.
- Adults support children's learning well, particularly by asking effective open questions to assess children's understanding and promote their speaking and listening skills. However, adults do not always ask more probing and challenging questions to help children think more deeply, for example, to solve problems for themselves.
- Children are achieving well because activities planned are based on accurate assessments of each child's needs. Observations are carried out regularly to assess how well children are learning. Children's work and their learning journals show good progression in a range of areas, particularly in their early writing and number skills.
- Children's behaviour is good. They cooperate well together and spontaneously help one another when needed. There is a calm, purposeful and orderly atmosphere in which children thrive. Children are interested and motivated, developing good attitudes to learning.
- Leadership in the early years is strong. Staff work effectively as a team, sharing expertise. The early years leader has a clear understanding of the strengths and areas to be improved in the setting and works hard to ensure that any new developments are thoroughly embedded.
- Children's safety, health and welfare are paramount. Staff ensure that children are kept safe and safeguarding policies and procedures are closely adhered to. There are daily risk assessments carried out to ensure that the environment is safe for children.
- Good relationships with parents ensure that they can work in partnership with the school to support their children's learning. For example, staff have led workshops on how parents can support their children with learning basic skills.

School details

Unique reference number	135838
Local authority	Durham
Inspection number	10012004

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	340
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Carole Barclay
Headteacher	Anita Boyd
Telephone number	0191 586 4515
Website	www.shottonhallprimary.durham.sch.uk
Email address	shottonhall.primaryschool@durhamlearning.net
Date of previous inspection	21–22 January 2014

Information about this school

- This school is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The vast majority of pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs or disability receiving support is higher than found nationally.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils for whom the pupil premium provides support is above the national 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.
- Children in the Nursery attend part time and those in the Reception year attend full time.
- The school meets the government's floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- The school provides extended childcare provision through running breakfast and after-school clubs. These are managed by the governing body and formed part of this inspection.
- The school's website meets requirements.
- The current headteacher took up her role in January 2015. Prior to this, there was significant turbulence in leadership and staffing.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed the quality of teaching, learning and assessment in all classes. The headteacher jointly observed the quality of teaching with the lead inspector in some lessons. Inspectors also made short visits to classrooms to evaluate the quality of the curriculum and the provision for different groups of pupils.
- Inspectors listened to a number of pupils read and reviewed the work in pupils' books.
- The inspectors spoke to pupils informally in lessons and breaktimes and met two groups of pupils more formally. They observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school.
- The inspectors held discussions with the headteacher, subject coordinators and other leaders, members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority. An inspector sought the views of a number of parents at the beginning of the school day.
- Inspectors evaluated a range of information including the school improvement plan; the school's evaluation of its own performance; minutes of governing body meetings; reports from the local authority; monitoring records of the quality of teaching; and information on pupils' progress, behaviour and attendance. They also looked at documents relating to safeguarding (protecting children and making sure they are safe). The lead inspector evaluated a wide range of information on the school's website.
- Inspectors considered the 76 responses made by parents to the Ofsted online questionnaire (Parent View) and considered the views expressed by parents in the school's own survey. They took into account the views expressed by 31 staff and 26 pupils.

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