

Shenley Primary School

London Road, Shenley, Radlett, Hertfordshire WD7 9DX

Inspection dates

27–28 June 2017

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- There are inconsistencies in the quality of teaching across different year groups. This means that not enough pupils are making fast enough progress.
- Outcomes in English and mathematics, especially for middle- and high-ability pupils at the end of key stage 2, have not been high enough for the last three years. However, there is recent evidence of improvement.
- Evaluations of the impact of pupil premium expenditure have not been carried out with sufficient attention to detail to ensure that provision for disadvantaged pupils provides good value for money.
- The wider curriculum is not taught in sufficient subject-specific depth to improve pupils' knowledge and understanding, especially in science, religious education, history and geography.
- The percentage of pupils who are absent or persistently absent has been high for the last two years and there is little evidence that the situation is improving. This is particularly true for disadvantaged pupils.
- Mathematics books, especially in lower key stage 2 and in key stage 1, show that pupils' understanding of mathematical reasoning and problem solving is insecure. Too frequently there is an over-emphasis on practising basic number work at the expense of deepening understanding.
- Middle- and higher-ability pupils in lower key stage 2 and key stage 1 are insufficiently challenged because work is not systematically based around their identified learning needs.

The school has the following strengths

- Governors are skilled and effective leaders. They have the necessary resolve and determination to drive the school forwards towards better outcomes for pupils.
- Pupils behave responsibly in class and around school and respect others' points of view; they are polite and well-mannered.
- Children make good progress in the early years due to effective teaching.
- High-quality teaching and raised expectations in upper key stage 2 are improving the attainment and progress of pupils in mathematics and English.
- Phonics is taught well and pupils apply their skills effectively in their reading, writing and spelling.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by ensuring that:
 - the curriculum provides far more opportunities for breadth and balance so pupils can consolidate and deepen their understanding, especially in history, geography, science and religious education
 - action is taken to reduce absence, including persistent absence, especially of disadvantaged pupils
 - programmes of support for disadvantaged pupils are thoroughly analysed to provide governors with detailed information about their impact.
- Improve the effectiveness of teaching, learning and assessment and, as a result, raise standards by ensuring that:
 - all teachers share the same high expectations about what pupils can achieve so that work is appropriately challenging and well matched to pupils' needs
 - opportunities are taken to share the best teaching practice across the school
 - pupils in every class are given plenty of opportunities to solve problems, deepen their understanding and explain their thinking in all areas of mathematics.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Leaders have not ensured that teaching or pupils' outcomes over time are consistently good. As a result, leadership and management requires improvement.
- Leaders have improved the quality of teaching in upper key stage 2. However, this focus on improving outcomes in reading and mathematics in Year 6 has not yet addressed inconsistencies in challenge, expectation and curriculum breadth or balance across the rest of the school.
- Instability in staffing and the difficulties of recruiting teachers have made it difficult for leaders to ensure consistently high standards. However, the headteacher and her leadership team have shown a determination to appoint permanent teachers, and the staffing situation has stabilised.
- Leadership of the curriculum is weak. In all classes, insufficient work has been undertaken this year in subjects other than English and mathematics. Consequently, pupils have not had enough opportunities to develop their skills particularly in history, geography, science and religious education. Where work is planned in these subjects it lacks the depth and quality required to deepen pupils' understanding.
- Leaders of English and mathematics are working hard to improve standards. There is evidence that their work is starting to have a positive impact. Recent training and support for individual members of staff is improving the quality of teaching and learning. For example, the teaching of reading is more effective because leaders have increased the frequency of guided reading sessions. Also, leaders have increased opportunities for assessing pupils' mathematical understanding. However, leaders have not challenged and supported staff sufficiently to address the variability in practice and in pupils' outcomes across the school.
- The use of the additional funding for disadvantaged pupils includes opportunities for confidence building, raising self-esteem and improving basic skills. However, the evaluation of these initiatives is too general and leaders are not clear about the impact of the different programmes. As a result, the progress of disadvantaged pupils is uneven across the school and for pupils of different prior attainment.
- Senior leaders have taken steps to improve the performance of teachers. Support plans are used and recent training is improving teachers' subject knowledge. Staff understand that they are accountable for the achievement of the pupils in their classes and they understand the drive for higher expectations in teaching, including the recent focus on improving the presentation of pupils' work.
- Leaders' work to promote pupils' rights, respect and responsibilities is evident around the school, particularly their promotion of tolerance and equalities. For example, leaders ensure that pupils understand the importance of challenging any homophobic language. Pupils are tolerant and respectful of each other and of adults. The promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is more effective than that of their cultural development. Nevertheless, links with local Jewish schools help pupils appreciate differences in beliefs and lifestyles.
- Sports funding has been used effectively to provide specialist teaching. This is having a

positive effect on pupils' enjoyment of physical education and the quality of provision. In a recent assembly, many pupils' sporting achievements, including success in local competitions, were rightly celebrated.

- Funding for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is used well. The inclusion leader ensures that staff who support vulnerable pupils are well trained. As a result, these pupils usually make good progress both in their personal development and in their learning.

Governance of the school

- The vast majority of governors are relatively new to their roles but they have rapidly developed a clear understanding of their statutory responsibilities. For example, they acted quickly, correctly anticipating that the school was about to be identified as a coasting school in 2017. They established a team to monitor improvement work and track pupils' progress more closely. They have become more confident in challenging senior leaders about the impact of their actions, and they are becoming more robust in their monitoring of the school's plans for improvement.
- Governors have a keen understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and they have the skills and abilities needed to provide vital strategic leadership. They have used resources sensibly, for example by creating the post of parents and families' adviser, to improve provision especially for disadvantaged pupils.
- The governing body took the decision to commission the local authority's partner improvement service to assist school leaders in their drive to improve teaching. This is having a positive impact, and English and mathematics leaders in particular have benefited from the additional support.
- Nevertheless, governors' actions have not yet had sufficient impact. The curriculum lacks breadth and balance, absence is too high, the quality of teaching across the school is inconsistent and pupils have not made enough progress in reading and mathematics in recent years.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders and governors have implemented safeguarding policies and procedures which meet statutory requirements. Staff are well informed and have received regular training on safeguarding, which follows the most recent national guidance. Staff are fully aware of the procedures to follow should they have any concerns about the safety and care of pupils.
- The headteacher is meticulous in keeping safeguarding records secure and up to date, ensuring that any concerns about pupils' safety and welfare are addressed promptly.
- The school works effectively with local agencies to ensure that vulnerable pupils and their families are identified and well supported. Leaders successfully engage with parents to make sure that pupils are safe and supported in school.
- Leaders ensure that the school's procedures and policies for keeping children safe on

the internet are understood well by pupils. Regular updates and reminders ensure that the important message of keeping safe is revisited often.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Teaching, learning and assessment are too variable across the school to be good. Inconsistent teaching has resulted in too many pupils underachieving. Despite some recent improvements, not all pupils are making the progress that should be expected of them. In particular, middle- and higher-ability pupils are not sufficiently challenged or supported to improve rapidly from their starting points.
- Discussions with pupils and checks in their books show that too many have an insecure understanding of the breadth of mathematical concepts. Pupils in Years 1 to 5 do not have sufficient opportunities to reason and solve problems covering a broad range of concepts in mathematics. However, the situation is much better in Year 6, where mathematics is taught well and pupils make strong progress in arithmetic and reasoning across the mathematics curriculum.
- Inspectors noted some exemplary practice in upper key stage 2. However, in other year groups, teachers were inconsistent in the amount of challenge and in their level of expectation about what pupils can achieve. As a result, the quality of work varies considerably across the school.
- The teaching of history, geography, science and religious education is weak across the school. Teachers do not plan enough work in these subjects and teachers' planning does not ensure that lessons either consolidate or deepen pupils' understanding. Very little work was seen in books and work on the walls represented only a fraction of the content expected for pupils, especially in key stage 2.
- In the majority of lessons, teachers ensure that pupils' present their work neatly and tidily so that they take pride in their work. Handwriting has improved although there is some discrepancy in approaches to joined-up writing because not all teachers have the same high expectations.
- Phonics is taught well and teachers in key stage 1 ensure that pupils make good progress by integrating phonics activities into reading and writing lessons.
- All teachers provide pupils with marking and feedback in line with school policy. Pupils regularly edit and improve their own work in response to the feedback they receive and they state that this encourages them to learn from their mistakes.
- In some lessons, teachers use questioning very effectively to assess pupils' understanding and deepen thinking. When this happens, pupils respond well and make good progress.
- Achievement is higher in lessons where teachers make good use of time, resources are engaging and careful planning ensures that tasks are well matched to pupils' needs. In other lessons, too much time is spent practising concepts which pupils have already mastered, or the class is moved on to independent activities before some pupils understand what to do next.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils say that they feel safe and the vast majority of parents agree. Pupils have a good understanding of leaders' actions to keep them safe, including on school visits. The curriculum promotes pupils' healthy lifestyles and their emotional and social development well.
- Pupils report that bullying is rare. They are confident that any poor behaviour will be dealt with quickly and fairly. They report that adults will listen to them carefully and resolve any conflicts that they may have. Play leaders and peer mediators, visible to their fellow pupils in their coloured bibs, provide further advice and reassurance to pupils as well as help to sort out any minor playground squabbles.
- Pupils have lots of opportunities to develop responsibility and to use their initiative. They can be elected to the school parliament where they can become the school's prime minister or deputy prime minister. They can also become sports ambassadors, helping to make decisions about which sports to introduce and taking responsibility for sports equipment.
- Effort and hard work are rewarded with 'Shenley shillings', which pupils enjoy spending in their local 'shop'. Pupils find this scheme rewarding and they enjoy helping to look after each other as well as reaping the rewards for their positive actions.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. The school has a calm, friendly environment and pupils walk sensibly around, entering and leaving lessons, the playground and assembly with due regard for school rules.
- Leaders and staff know the pupils well and individualised plans are in place to support those pupils who have identified behavioural needs. While most pupils behave well during most lessons, some do occasionally become inattentive. These incidents of low-level misbehaviour, while infrequent, generally result either from a lack of understanding by pupils about their work or from an activity that is either insufficiently challenging or too hard.
- Senior leaders use a range of strategies to promote attendance, including a weekly attendance cup and 'reward time' for the winning class. The attendance officer ensures that families are notified when attendance is dropping and organises meetings with parents to try to resolve attendance issues. Nevertheless, disadvantaged pupils' attendance remains in the lowest 10% nationally and overall absence rates, including persistent absence, is still high.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- In the national assessments for the last three years, pupils' progress in reading and mathematics at the end of key stage 2 has been below, and sometimes well below,

other pupils nationally. In January 2017, the school was defined as 'coasting' by the regional schools commissioner because pupils have not been making enough progress from their starting points over the last three years.

- Outcomes in mathematics at key stage 2 in 2016 were particularly low with only 55% of pupils reaching the expected standard compared with 70% nationally. The attainment of disadvantaged pupils was low in both reading and mathematics.
- Outcomes for the current most able pupils, including the most able disadvantaged, are higher in Year 6 because of the more challenging teaching they receive. In other year groups, their progress is inconsistent because teachers' expectations vary. In the 2016 key stage 1 assessments, outcomes for disadvantaged pupils were above national expectations in mathematics but below in reading and writing.
- Work in pupils' books shows that pupils currently in Year 6 are doing better and the school's own tracking information confirms this improving picture. Nevertheless, work seen in other year groups shows that learning is inconsistent in mathematics and in science, history, geography and religious education.
- Writing is a stronger subject across the school, although opportunities for writing in subjects other than English are limited, due to the imbalance in the curriculum.
- Outcomes at the end of key stage 1 were above national expectations in 2016 in reading, writing and mathematics. Work in pupils' books illustrates that they have a good grasp of number in mathematics but opportunities for applying these skills to solve problems in other areas of mathematics are inconsistent. Outcomes in subjects other than English and mathematics are less secure because there are fewer opportunities for pupils to undertake work in these areas of the curriculum.
- Younger pupils read confidently and they use their phonics skills well to read unknown words. Pupils in Year 6 read with fluency and expression. Comprehension skills are improving because of improvements introduced to the teaching of guided reading by the English subject leader.
- Outcomes in the phonics screening check were above the national average in 2015 and in line with national expectations in 2016. Current pupils in Year 1 are on track to do well in their 2017 phonics assessments.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress because work is well matched to their learning needs and they receive good support from staff. Teaching assistants have undertaken training to improve their skills and knowledge of individual pupils' needs and this has enabled them to tailor support to meet specific needs.
- This year, pupils in upper key stage 2 are making improved progress and attaining higher levels in English and mathematics. They are expected to provide explanations and reasons for their thinking and this is deepening their knowledge and understanding.

Early years provision

Good

- Children join the Reception and Nursery classes with an increasingly wide variety of skills and knowledge. In 2016, the proportion of children who reached a good level of development by the end of the early years was slightly below the national average.

Most children make good progress from their different starting points.

- Additional support is in place to improve outcomes for disadvantaged children. This includes identifying opportunities to promote social skills as well as academic progress in phonics and writing.
- Leadership of the early years is effective. The early years leader has ensured that all staff are appropriately trained to identify and plan for individual children's needs. Adults use assessment information well to plan activities which capture children's imagination. The children are keen to participate in their learning and staff use questioning well to deepen their thinking.
- The early years leader has made improvements to the learning environment and she has introduced new approaches, such as children taking more responsibility for tidying up and choosing their own area of the classrooms to work in. These changes promote children's independence and develop their maturity.
- The early years leader identifies further areas for improving provision in Nursery and Reception. However, these plans have not yet been formalised or fully costed and consequently the rationale and details have not been subject to sufficient scrutiny by senior leaders or governors.
- Teaching and learning in the early years is well matched to the assessed needs of the majority of children. As a result of good provision, pupils are well prepared to start Year 1.
- Assessments of children's development are accurate and records are well organised. The children's learning records are carefully annotated to record achievements and progress and to identify the next steps for each child's development. Current children are making at least typical progress and some are making more than this.
- Children's behaviour is good. A wide range of learning opportunities are planned, both indoors and outside, which are well supported by staff. This enables children to become confident and enthusiastic learners. The classrooms and outdoor area are well resourced although there is a limited number of writing prompts set up in the outdoor area.
- Children are well looked after. Staff give children's welfare a high priority and make sure that the statutory safeguarding requirements are met. Relationships between parents and staff are positive. Parents feel welcome and included and they confirm that they receive useful information about how their children are getting on.

School details

Unique reference number	117150
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	10031497

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	287
Appropriate authority	Local authority
Chair	Jamie Dean Stockwell
Headteacher	Katy Longley
Telephone number	01923 855 864
Website	www.shenleyprimary.co.uk/
Email address	admin@shenley.herts.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	28 February – 1 March 2013

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- In January 2017, the school was informed by the regional schools commissioner that it met the definition for a 'coasting' school, following three years of underperformance.
- The school is slightly larger than the average primary school.
- The majority of pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is well below average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils eligible for the pupil premium funding is below the national average.

- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and who are receiving support is below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils whose first language is believed not to be English is well below the national average
- Since the previous inspection there have been significant changes in the governing body, including a new chair of governors.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed learning throughout the school, including joint observations with the headteacher. A learning walk was carried out jointly with the headteacher.
- Inspectors scrutinised pupils' work in every subject and every year group.
- The inspectors listened to Year 1, Year 2 and Year 6 pupils read.
- The inspectors met with pupils, formally and informally, to listen to their views.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, English leader, mathematics leader, inclusion leader, early years leader, PE leader, parents' and families' adviser, the school's external improvement partner and the governing body. A telephone conversation was held with the chair of the governing body.
- The inspection team scrutinised a wide range of documentation that covered: information about pupils' attainment and progress; the school's self-evaluation and improvement plan; minutes of meetings; and records relating to teaching and learning, pupils' attendance and behaviour and safeguarding of pupils. Scrutiny of the website was also undertaken.
- The inspectors considered the views expressed by parents through informal meetings and the 99 responses to Ofsted's online survey (Parent View) as well as comments received via the free-text facility on Parent View.

Inspection team

Nick Rudman, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Sean Powell	Ofsted Inspector
Dominic Carver	Ofsted Inspector
Nathan Lowe	Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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Textphone: 0161 618 8524
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