

Shotley Bridge Primary School

Benfieldside Road, Shotley Bridge, Consett, County Durham DH8 0SQ

Inspection dates

15–16 May 2018

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Leaders, including governors, managed the amalgamation of the infant and junior schools sensitively and decisively. A sense of 'oneness' permeates all aspects of school life.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good. Senior leaders are adept at identifying aspects of teaching and learning that require further development. They provide bespoke training opportunities for staff.
- Subject leaders are knowledgeable. They have correctly identified the strengths and areas for development in their subjects.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced. It entices pupils and excites staff. Learning through fun, hard work and perseverance is evident throughout the school.
- Current pupils, including the small numbers of disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities, make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The vast majority of teachers use assessment information well to plan work for their pupils. Leaders have identified the need for teachers' expectations to be higher and for work to be even more challenging, including in the early years.
- Parents and carers are appreciative of the actions teachers take to ensure that children settle into the Reception class rapidly. Children make good progress in the early years.
- Parental support for the school is strong. Parents ensure that homework is completed and many read with their children every day.
- A very high proportion of pupils achieve the expected standard for their age in the Year 1 phonics screening check. All pupils reach the standard by the end of Year 2. They are equipped well to read the more challenging texts in key stage 2.
- As the school has grown, its administrative systems and procedures have become unwieldy. They require streamlining.
- Pupils' attendance is above average because they enjoy learning. They are polite, respectful, inquisitive and want to succeed. Pupils are superb ambassadors for the school. They carry out roles of responsibility most conscientiously in the safe and secure school environment.
- Governance is improving. However, governors find it difficult to fulfil their challenge role strongly because there are few measurable targets in the school's improvement plans by which to evaluate progress.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Strengthen the effectiveness of leadership and management by ensuring that:
 - the school’s administrative systems and procedures are streamlined and current documents are available to parents
 - the school’s website is compliant with requirements
 - improvement plans include measurable targets, timescales for completion and clear separation between those who carry out actions and those who check and evaluate the effectiveness of actions undertaken.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, and consequently pupils’ outcomes, further by making sure that:
 - teachers, including those in the early years, have the very highest expectations of their pupils
 - assessment information is used incisively by all teachers to provide challenging work with which pupils have to grapple to succeed and excel.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Leaders have successfully overseen the amalgamation of an infant and junior school, together with an increase of pupils on roll to 376. They have created a harmonious primary school in which togetherness abounds, staff are valued and pupils make good progress. A member of staff correctly described the school as a 'happy place where children thrive'.
- 'Quality first teaching' is one of the headteacher's expectations. He, supported by the governing body, took assertive action to remodel the teaching workforce. This, and the bespoke training opportunities that are put in place for teachers and teaching assistants, have ensured that the quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good overall. Leaders recognise that not enough of their pupils reach the very highest standards in reading, writing and mathematics from their individual starting points. The provision of more challenging work for pupils is a key area for development.
- The website was not compliant with the government's requirements at the beginning of the inspection. For example, some statutory policies had been reviewed appropriately, ratified by the governing body but not uploaded to the website correctly. In addition, the hyperlinks to some documents did not work. Parents were unable to access these documents online. The school's administrative systems and procedures require streamlining to make them more efficient.
- Subject leaders are passionate and extremely knowledgeable about their subjects. They keep abreast of developments in their subjects and identify the actions required to improve standards correctly. For example, as a result of work undertaken by the subject leader for English, pupils' handwriting and presentation are much improved since the beginning of the academic year. However, leaders' plans do not routinely outline targets by which progress can be measured, the resource required and who will evaluate the effectiveness of the actions carried out.
- The school's curriculum is one of its strengths. Teachers, in partnership with parents, ensure that pupils can read fluently by the end of Year 1. Pupils read for pleasure from an early age. They gather new knowledge from their reading regularly and apply this knowledge across the exciting and skills-based curriculum. The Year 6 pupils are prepared particularly well for the rigours of secondary schooling. They are well rounded, independent and curious.
- The school's formal curriculum is extremely well supported by the content of the in-class assemblies. For example, during the inspection, the Year 1 pupils discussed what to do when the going gets tough, when times are difficult and they experience 'a dip'. One, very pertinently, gave an example of having to persevere when learning to do a handstand. In this pupil's experience, lots of practice and not giving up are the answer.
- The provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is woven seamlessly into school life. Even the very youngest pupils are able to reflect on the 'big' issues of the day sensibly. Similarly, pupils understand fundamental British values. Leaders bring local, national and international events into school. The pupils understand the rule of law. They vote in school council elections and are looking forward to voting in general

elections. They like their views to be counted.

- Leaders spend the government's additional funding to support the small number of disadvantaged pupils well. These pupils make good progress from their starting points. Similarly, the small number of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities make good progress at Shotley Bridge. Funding is used wisely to provide appropriate support. Parents said that they are very happy with the timeliness of the school's referrals to support services, including the child and adolescent mental health service, the speech and language service and occupational therapy.
- The primary physical education (PE) and sport funding is very well spent. Pupils have opportunities to take part in a wide range of activities including golf, archery and skiing. In addition, over 90% of pupils attend an extra-curricular club.
- The local authority supported the school during the amalgamation well, especially in relation to staffing. An educational development partner (EDP) from the local authority visits the school regularly and provides an external view of the school's effectiveness for the governing body. Staff appreciate attending the local authority's network meetings and having their assessments of the standards reached by pupils checked for accuracy.

Governance of the school

- Governors have an accurate view of the school's strengths and areas for development. Following a period of turbulence during the amalgamation, they celebrate the school's cohesive staff, well-behaved pupils and welcoming culture of care.
- Governors initiated the recent survey of parental views. They analysed parents' responses thoroughly and took action to address parents' concerns. For example, parents are now better informed about their children's progress through termly short reports.
- Governors, through local authority training, have an improved understanding of primary school assessment information. In 2016, they took assertive action to call a special meeting to evaluate end of key stage assessment information before it was published formally. They know that a greater proportion of pupils should be making better progress to reach higher standards in reading, writing and mathematics. Governors have found it difficult to challenge senior and subject leaders strongly because of the lack of measurable targets in the school's development plans.
- Governors have not ensured that the headteacher and deputy headteacher have sufficient time to lead teaching, learning and assessment rigorously. Too much of senior leaders' time is spent dealing with the school's cumbersome administrative systems and procedures.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. All staff have read Part 1 of the government's 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' document.
- The school's procedures for the safe recruitment of staff meet requirements. An appropriate number of staff and governors have completed safer recruitment training.

- All staff act in accordance with the school's child protection through safeguarding policy. Their training, including in respect of radicalisation and extremism, female genital mutilation and paediatric first aid, is up to date. The staff understand the school's whistle-blowing policy. They know when and to who concerns must be reported.
- Vulnerable pupils' needs are identified and met well. The designated leaders for child protection liaise with a wide range of external agencies, including children's services departments within and beyond County Durham, effectively. They follow up concerns and disclosures tenaciously.
- Both sites are safe and secure. Risk assessments are completed and reviewed appropriately.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Current pupils make good progress because the quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good across the school. Leaders check on teachers' practice in classrooms regularly. Any areas for development are identified quickly, training is provided to address the issues and senior leaders check that improvements are sustained. This process is very effective in improving the standard of teaching and learning.
- Teachers use questioning well. They wait patiently for pupils to give full and reasoned answers to their questions. This is a strength throughout the school.
- Teaching assistants are deployed extremely well. They take a full and active part in teaching and learning at Shotley Bridge. Often, inspectors found it difficult to differentiate between teachers and teaching assistants in lessons.
- The provision for phonics is very strong. Teachers work in partnership with parents to ensure that pupils practise their early reading skills often. As a result, pupils read for pleasure from a very early age. They gather, store and use knowledge gained from their reading well.
- Senior leaders, during joint observations with inspectors of teaching and learning in classrooms and joint checks of pupils' work, identified correctly that teachers do not consistently provide work that is precisely matched to pupils' abilities. Their expectations of pupils are occasionally too low. As a result, pupils do not make the outstanding progress of which they are capable.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- Pupils understand the value of education. They want to learn and succeed. Pupils answer teachers' and each other's questions willingly, always giving a reason for their opinions. They complete homework diligently. The vast majority choose to attend the wide range of extra-curricular activities that the school offers.

- Across the school, pupils have an exemplary knowledge of the repeated actions that constitute bullying. They told members of the inspection team that there is no bullying at Shotley Bridge. However, if any should occur, they are confident that staff would deal with it appropriately.
- Online safety is also understood well by the pupils. They protect their personal information when working online. They know not to give any information to strangers. Online safety posters, designed by the pupils, adorn the walls.
- Pupils care for each other well. They willingly take on areas of responsibility, such as mini-buddies. As one Year 2 pupil said, 'If you can think of a thing, we have a monitor for it!'

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. They are polite, respectful, happy and delightful. There have been no pupils excluded from school since the amalgamation in 2015.
- Classrooms are hives of activity in which pupils' attitudes to learning are exemplary. Pupils work cooperatively with each other and want to please their teachers. Incidents of low-level disruption in classrooms are extremely rare.
- Pupils arrive for school on time and attend school regularly. Their attendance is above the national average over time.
- The school's most recent surveys of pupils', parents' and staff's views are extremely positive about all aspects of the school's work. In addition, the 187 parents that completed Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, during the inspection are overwhelmingly positive about children's behaviour.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Pupils make good progress from their starting points in key stage 2. Pupils reach standards in Year 6 that are well above the national averages in reading, writing and mathematics, at both the expected and high standards. As a result of effective action taken by senior leaders, the current cohort of Year 6 pupils is making better progress than previous cohorts, especially in writing and mathematics.
- Similarly, pupils make good progress from their starting points in key stage 1. They too reach above-average standards in reading, writing and mathematics, at both the expected and greater depth levels.
- The very small number of disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities make good progress too.
- Pupils do not make outstanding progress in reading, writing and mathematics because the work that is set for them does not provide sufficient challenge.
- Outcomes in phonics are outstanding. In 2017, 98% of the large cohort of pupils achieved and exceeded the standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check. Over time, all pupils enter key stage 2 being able to read fluently.
- Pupils at the end of key stages 1 and 2 are more than ready for the next stage in their

education.

Early years provision

Good

- Leaders' evaluation of the early years, informed by the local authority's most recent visit, was inflated at the beginning of the inspection. The early years leader carried out lesson observations and checked children's work with the inspectors and agreed that the provision is good but not outstanding.
- The children, including disadvantaged children and those who have SEN and/or disabilities, make good progress from their starting points on entry to the Reception class. The proportion that achieves a good level of development is above average over time. However, the school's EDP has identified that the proportion of children who reach a good level of development from their individual starting points should be higher.
- Children make exceptional progress in phonics to develop very good early reading skills. Teachers assess pupils' phonic knowledge every day. Children change teaching groups regularly, as their skills and abilities develop, so that the work is consistently well matched to their needs. The children are prepared well for the demands of reading in key stage 1.
- The indoor and outdoor learning environments are safe and secure. Children care for each other and look after each other well. Teachers encourage children's independence. For example, the children applied sun protection cream liberally to their own faces, arms and legs before going outside to work during the inspection.
- The provision for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is especially strong in the Reception class. Teachers ensure that a visual timetable for the day is prepared each morning. Children know what is going to happen and when. There are no surprises. Their needs are met. They feel safe and secure.
- Teachers and teaching assistants take great care to get the basics right. For example, they model correct letter and number formation at every opportunity throughout the school day.
- Teachers enable children to take safe risks. For example, half of the children took part in a very well-organised PE lesson during the inspection. They used a wide range of apparatus carefully to develop their skills and abilities. The children were very excited to climb a swinging rope ladder and almost reach the ceiling.
- Some teaching and learning activities do not have the same level of challenge as the PE activities. For example, children's writing is sometimes limited by the number of lines on the writing grids that teachers provide. These children write two or three correctly punctuated sentences. They are capable of so much more. On these occasions, teachers' expectations are not high enough.
- Parents are very happy with the arrangements made for their children on entry to school. Parents and children are made to feel very welcome. Parental comments include, 'My child skips in every day', 'I'm over the moon she is here' and 'a fantastic staff who really care'.

School details

Unique reference number (URN)	114038
Local authority	Durham
Inspection number	10048169

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	376
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	David Grimes
Headteacher	Martin Bell
Telephone number	01207 260444
Website	www.shotleybridge-inf.durham.sch.uk
Email address	m.bell200@durhamlearning.net
Date of previous inspection	24–25 March 2015

Information about this school

- Shotley Bridge Infant School (URN 114037) amalgamated with Shotley Bridge Junior School (URN 114038) on 1 September 2015. At the time of the amalgamation, the infant school was judged to be outstanding, and the junior school required improvement. Shotley Bridge Primary School retains the infant school's URN.
- Children in the early years and pupils in key stage 1 attend school on the Benfieldside Road site. Pupils in key stage 2 attend school on the Snows Green Road site. The two sites are half a mile apart.
- The school does not meet requirements for the publication of information about key stage 2 results and the pupil premium grant on its website.
- The school met the government's floor standards in 2017. These are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- The school is much larger than the average-sized primary school.

- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is well below average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils, those eligible for support through the pupil premium funding, is half the national average.
- The vast majority of pupils speak English as their first language.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed lessons across a range of subjects in the early years and key stages 1 and 2. Some observations were carried out jointly with senior leaders.
- During visits to lessons, inspectors spoke with pupils and looked at their work to find out more about how well they are learning.
- The lead inspector met with governors, including the chair and vice-chair of governors.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school. Formal meetings were held with a group of pupils from Year 2 and a group from Years 3, 4, 5 and 6.
- The lead inspector discussed the school's effectiveness with two EDPs from Durham local authority.
- Discussions were also held with the headteacher/acting special educational needs coordinator (SENCo), deputy headteacher/early years leader, subject leaders and two groups of teachers/teaching assistants.
- Inspectors read with two pupils from the Reception class, two from Year 2 and two from Year 3 on the first day of the inspection.
- Members of the team observed the work of the school more broadly and looked at a range of documentation. This included policies, leaders' evaluation of the school's effectiveness, the school's improvement plans, safeguarding records and information about pupils' attendance, attainment and progress.
- Inspectors considered the 187 responses to Ofsted's Parent View survey alongside the school's most recent surveys of the views of pupils, parents and staff. Inspectors also talked to parents who were dropping their children off at school at the beginning of the school day.
- An inspector evaluated the support plans for the small number of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities, checked the extent to which plans are put in place in lessons and talked to some of these pupils' parents by telephone.

Inspection team

Belita Scott, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
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Zoe Westley	Ofsted Inspector
Geoff Dorrity	Ofsted Inspector

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In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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