

Shield Row Primary School

King Edward VIII Terrace, Shield Row, Stanley, County Durham DH9 0HQ

Inspection dates

27–28 June 2018

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	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Highly effective leadership from the headteacher and the Tudhoe Learning Trust has rapidly improved the school. New management systems have brought consistency and stability. Leaders demonstrate good capacity to sustain improvements.
- Pupils currently in the school are making good progress in reading, writing and mathematics. Weaker teaching in the past means some pupils in key stage 2 still have gaps in their knowledge. However, well-focused teaching is helping to address these weaknesses.
- Most teaching is good. Teachers are benefiting from detailed curriculum plans. As a result, pupils describe learning as 'fun and interesting'. However, some teachers have gaps in their mathematical subject knowledge and do not teach spelling precisely enough.
- The tight curriculum structure means pupils with different starting points generally make similar progress. However, some opportunities to challenge the most able pupils and to support pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities are missed.
- In most classes, the disadvantaged pupils are achieving as well as their peers. Where they are behind, they are receiving good support to help them catch up.
- Behaviour in the school is good. A new behaviour policy has been applied consistently by the staff and, as a result, the school is a calm and well-ordered community.
- The school's more interesting and engaging curriculum has contributed to an improvement in attendance, which matches that seen nationally. However, some disadvantaged pupils miss school too often.
- Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a strength of the school. Pupils adopt mature and well-rounded views which prepare them well for life in modern Britain.
- Lively and energetic teaching ensures that children make a good start in the early years. They make good progress across the Nursery and Reception Years to attain standards above those seen nationally.
- Governors provide effective scrutiny and challenge. They are increasingly confident in their roles.
- Almost all the parents and carers who responded to Parent View are pleased with the school. Many commented on the positive impact of the headteacher since her appointment.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, by:
 - ensuring that the most able pupils have more opportunities to apply their knowledge individually and creatively
 - improving how spelling is taught and checking pupils consistently apply basic writing skills to a high standard
 - developing the mathematical subject knowledge of teachers, so that they more effectively develop pupils' grasp of key concepts.
- Check more carefully the quality and impact of support plans for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities.
- Further improve the attendance of disadvantaged pupils.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- For Shield Row Primary, the transition to a sponsored academy was not easy or smooth. Initial resistance to change slowed progress and led to a turbulent period. This was exacerbated by the challenging behaviour of some cohorts of pupils who had disengaged with learning. Outcomes, as recently as those seen at the end of key stage 2 last year, were disappointing.
- Since her appointment, the headteacher has successfully raised expectations and implemented new policies and procedures that have transformed the school. Parents, the governors, staff and pupils all say the school has moved forwards quickly over the last year. Nine out of 10 parents who responded to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, would recommend the school. The staff feel buoyed up by the clear sense of direction and morale is good.
- The Tudhoe Learning Trust has quietly provided effective support in the background. The trust's tried and tested management systems have quickly made a real difference. Teachers welcome the training and guidance they receive and have benefited from opportunities to visit other trust schools. Senior leaders within the trust have also monitored the school's progress rigorously and provided the headteacher and governors with good-quality strategic reports. Consequently, they have an accurate and detailed grasp of the school's strengths and weaknesses.
- The school improvement plan, written in April 2017, recognised some root and branch changes were needed. As such, it provided all members of staff with the direction and guidance needed. At the top of the list of priorities was the need to address poor behaviour that had undermined staff morale. A new approach to managing behaviour was introduced and rapid improvements were quickly made. Behaviour in the school is now good. Pupils moderate their own behaviour effectively in response to the consistent management of behaviour by the staff.
- The headteacher and other leaders have also improved the breadth and balance of the curriculum. English and mathematics are now rigorously planned, and the wider curriculum is more engaging and interesting. Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is strong. A school-wide topic on equalities has helped pupils to reflect on the negative effects of discrimination and the rights of groups with protected characteristics. Pupils are taught about democracy and are encouraged to be tolerant and respectful of different cultures and faiths.
- Leaders make effective use of the pupil premium. They carefully track the progress disadvantaged pupils make and prioritise them for extra help in reading and mathematics. Consequently, there is no difference in outcomes between disadvantaged pupils and others currently in the early years, in phonics or at key stage 1. Gaps in attainment are narrowing in key stage 2. Ongoing arrangements are in place to support those disadvantaged pupils in Year 5 who are progressing less well in writing.
- The use of special educational needs funding is weaker. Inspectors found some

support plans to lack ambition, with out-of-date targets in need of review. Teachers are not always involved as much as they should be in setting short-term objectives for pupils.

- Primary physical education and sports funding is used well. Teachers regularly teach alongside external sports coaches, which helps them to hone their skills and improves their confidence. Parents comment about the wider range of sports and other healthy activities the school now provides. Pupils are active at social times because the school has invested in a wide range of play and gym equipment. The school is successful in a broad programme of competitive sports for boys and girls.

Governance of the school

- The governors were apprehensive about the school becoming a sponsored academy and their prevarication contributed, in part, to the school's mixed fortunes after being placed in special measures in 2014. However, the governors now accept the change has been good for the school. They have formed an effective working relationship with the headteacher and increased their day-to-day activity in the school. They recognise that the trust has provided effective extra resources and guidance at a time of need.
- The governors are reflective and have learned lessons from the past. They ensure that their monitoring activities are now more tightly focused on the impact of leaders' actions. For example, they have looked closely at leaders' work to improve attendance and measured the effect this has on pupils' progress.
- Well-designed training sessions have strengthened the skills of governors. They have a secure grasp of assessment information and use it to ask pertinent questions about the progress of different groups of pupils. They know, for example, how well disadvantaged pupils are doing in comparison to other pupils and they measure the effect of the extra help provided for targeted pupils.
- Governors also have good systems in place to canvas the views of parents and pupils and use this information to improve the school.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. The headteacher and governors systematically check the quality of the school's work to keep pupils safe and act quickly if weaknesses are found. They ensure that policies and procedures are up to date and are followed consistently.
- Over the last year, standards of behaviour have improved, and incidents of derogatory language and bullying have become rare. Pupils of different ages say they feel safe in school and trust adults to care for them.
- Weekly staff briefings ensure that all members of staff are well informed and know what to do to keep pupils safe. Leaders act quickly and follow things through when they act to protect a child a risk. They work effectively with external agencies.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Lessons across the school are well planned and organised because leaders, with the help of the trust, have put in place detailed schemes of work and assessment systems. Typically, pupils know what is expected of them and receive purposeful feedback that helps them to improve their work. The consistent expectation set by teachers means pupils take care and pride in the presentation of their work.
- Following a period of considerable turbulence prior to and after the school's conversion to an academy in September 2015, teaching is now much more settled. Most teachers say morale in school is good and they welcome the consistent guidance and training they receive, which are helping to strengthen their subject knowledge.
- Lessons start promptly. Teachers use engaging activities to capture pupils' interest. Teachers also consistently explain to pupils the objectives for the lesson and share criteria against which pupils can check their grasp of new knowledge. In most lessons inspectors visited, teachers had tailored the work they provided for pupils with different starting points. However, some teachers missed opportunities to stretch and challenge the most able pupils sufficiently. For example, pupils were not always able to give well-reasoned explanations for their answers because they had not been taught the necessary language skills.
- Following her appointment, the headteacher was quick to put in place a more structured school day and a tighter learning sequence across the week, to ensure the national curriculum was followed in full. Pupils' knowledge and skills now progress more rapidly as a result. Better curriculum resources are now in place, such as those used in mathematics lessons. For example, there is an array of practical apparatus used in key stage 1 to support pupils' grasp of number and shape and lots of thought-provoking mathematical problems are used by teachers in key stage 2. However, some teachers lack the necessary subject knowledge to really extend pupils' grasp of mathematical concepts.
- Daily spelling sessions have been introduced because leaders' checks on pupils' books have found too many errors. Teachers now mark pupils' spellings more attentively. However, the quality of teaching in spelling sessions is variable and does not always help pupils to understand spelling patterns clearly enough. Some pupils do not consistently apply their writing skills in subjects beyond English.
- The partnership between teachers and teaching assistants is effective. Teaching assistants make a good contribution to learning through their thoughtful questioning and encouragement. Some teaching assistants also provide good one-to-one support for pupils who need help to catch up or for more vulnerable pupils to develop their resilience and determination.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- The school's strong spiritual, moral, social and cultural curriculum makes a positive contribution to pupils' understanding of the world and prepares them well for life in modern Britain. Topics such as crime and punishment; leading women in society; Black

History Month; and lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) rights have helped pupils to challenge stereotypes and to adopt tolerant and respectful attitudes. In discussion, inspectors found pupils to be well informed and keen to take part in mature debate.

- Pupils are also well informed about mental and physical health. More-vulnerable pupils receive good support to develop their resilience and ability to cope.
- Records show there are very few incidents of bullying or derogatory language. Relationships between staff and pupils are warm and caring. Most parents and all members of staff say that children are happy and safe at school.
- There are good arrangements in place to broaden pupils' understanding of the world. For example, there are good cultural trips to the theatre and to places of interest such as Souter Lighthouse and Durham Cathedral, as well as residential trips and charitable work. The school council is active. It has improved the range of healthy snacks for pupils at playtime and raised over £1,000 for charity last year.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. The introduction of a new behaviour policy last year has had a considerable impact. In lessons, pupils display positive attitudes and take pride in their work. They sustain their concentration and work productively. Work in most books is presented to a high quality and pupils commit to reviewing, editing and improving their work. At social times, pupils abide by the school's rules and make good use of the wide range of play equipment available. Play leaders and playground buddies help pupils to get involved and to make new friends.
- In the recent past, however, the standard of behaviour was a concern. Last year, the level of exclusions was high. Behaviour records since then show a steady decline in incidents of poor behaviour. In the most recent months, incidents of poor behaviour have become rare.
- The overall level of attendance has improved this year and now matches the national average for primary schools. Leaders have focused effectively on the attendance of pupils who miss school more often. As a result, the proportion of pupils who are persistently absent from school has declined significantly this year. However, some disadvantaged pupils remain more likely to miss school regularly, which slows their progress.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Strong provision in the early years means most children are ready to enter key stage 1 and have a good grounding in basic skills. Reading is heavily promoted and most pupils progress well through the school's preferred reading programme. Pupils can use and apply their grasp of phonics to decode new words effectively and most progress to become fluent readers. Pupils who find this transition more difficult are given extra help. In recent years, the proportion of pupils attaining the expected standard in the Year 1 national phonics screening check has been above the national average.
- Pupils make consistently good progress across key stage 1 in reading, writing and

mathematics. Last year, the proportion of pupils who attained the expected standard was above that seen nationally. The school's assessments and the work in pupils' books indicate that similar proportions of pupils will attain the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics this year. Standards at key stage 1 have become more secure since the school joined the Tudhoe Learning Trust.

- At key stage 2, some pupils still have gaps in their knowledge and understanding, because of weak teaching and a poorly planned curriculum in the past. The quality of spelling is too variable, and some pupils still make basic grammatical errors in their written work. However, the much-improved teaching and tighter curriculum model now in place are ensuring that many more pupils are making the progress they should. Disadvantaged pupils are making similar progress to other pupils in most classes. Although attainment at the end of key stage 2 was well below average last year, the quality of work in books shows that pupils currently in the school are making strong progress and attaining standards close to those seen nationally. Leaders are confident in their assessments that show a picture of rapid improvement across key stage 2.
- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities make similar progress to their peers. However, individual support plans are not aspirational enough and do not provide good enough guidance for class teachers.
- The most able pupils are making secure progress. However, the tight structure in lessons means there are limited opportunities for the most able to work independently or creatively. Consequently, the proportion of pupils on track to attain the higher standard in reading, writing and mathematics is below that seen nationally.
- Rates of progress in English and mathematics are rising quickly because leaders have provided teachers with clear guidance and a tightly structured scheme of work. In English, the curriculum is built around the study of interesting and thought-provoking novels. In mathematics, the content of lessons is carefully planned in response to rigorous assessments of pupils' existing understanding. This heightened level of planning has ensured that most pupils in both key stages are now making good progress. Although leaders recognise there is more to do to develop the teaching of other national curriculum subjects, pupils also make secure progress across the curriculum and study subjects in sufficient detail to be well prepared for secondary school.

Early years provision

Good

- Most children enter the Nursery Year with skills that are broadly typical for their age. Some children enter with weaker skills in speech and language and some have had limited experiences beyond their immediate community. Early years staff assess children's starting points carefully and thoughtfully plan the curriculum to address their developmental needs.
- By the time children enter the Reception Year, children are working with skills typical for their age. They make good progress and attain standards that are a little above those seen nationally. Standards have risen steadily over the last three years, as leaders have refined and improved the quality of provision.
- Teaching is lively and energetic. Teachers foster real enthusiasm and curiosity in

children through the well-planned curriculum. Every opportunity is taken to foster children's grasp of basic skills in reading, writing and number. Helpful learning resources are easily accessible for children both indoors and in the outdoor areas, which are skilfully utilised by teachers. For example, when the register is taken at the start of the day, children count aloud the number of children attending, following a display of written numbers. They also count how many children are absent and write these numbers on the board. This simple process is skilfully used by teachers to establish number sequences and to introduce concepts of addition and subtraction.

- Leadership of the early years is highly effective. The early years leader has benefited from opportunities to work with other early years specialists in the Tudhoe Learning Trust. Visits to other schools in the trust have also proved helpful in shaping the style of teaching. For example, teachers in the Nursery and Reception are now more adept at observing children as they play and knowing when, and when not, to get involved to move learning forwards. Excellent records are kept of each child's learning and progress. Staff meet regularly to review these records so that each child's next steps are carefully catered for.
- The early years is a safe and secure environment. Prior to children's admission to the school, the early years staff visit homes to gather information on each new child's interests and needs. Each morning, parents are greeted at the door and have good opportunities across the year to stay and play with their children. There is a well-established cycle in which the early years staff meet parents to review their children's progress, and in turn, set new targets. This approach fosters a positive working partnership between the school and home. One parent, who responded to Parent View, reflected the views of other parents when they said, 'The early years staff are amazing at their jobs and I can't praise them enough.'
- Children play happily together and quickly develop mature social skills because of the well organised and structured day. They learn to concentrate and to apply themselves productively to tasks. Inspectors observed children participating with tremendous enthusiasm when applying their phonics skills to new words. All the children in the group rose to the challenge posed by the teacher and delighted in demonstrating their skills.
- Boosted by the improved outcomes over recent years, leaders plan to expand the Nursery from September 2018 and offer full-time provision for interested families.

School details

Unique reference number	141997
Local authority	Durham
Inspection number	10048357

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	204
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Rachel Hodge
Headteacher	Jill Cooke
Telephone number	01207 239661
Website	www.shieldrow.durham.sch.uk
Email address	office@shieldrow.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Shield Row Primary School became a sponsored academy within the Tudhoe Learning Trust in September 2015. The Tudhoe Learning Trust has a board of directors who appoint a local governing body for each school in the trust.
- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The headteacher took up post in February 2016.
- Most pupils are White British.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for support through the pupil premium is above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is above average. The proportion of pupils who have a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan is below average.
- The school meets the government's current floor targets measure, which is the

minimum expectation for pupils' attainment and progress at the end of key stage 2.

- Currently, children attend the Nursery for mornings only. However, from September 2018 the school plans to introduce full-time Nursery provision. The school does not provide places for two-year-olds.
- The school provides a breakfast club and after-school activities.
- The school does not make use of any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited lessons across all phases of the school, including the Nursery and Reception classes. Some visits to lessons were undertaken jointly with the headteacher. During observations, inspectors sampled pupils' books and talked to pupils to evaluate the quality of their current work. In addition, inspectors scrutinised, in detail, a sample of pupils' books containing work from English, mathematics and the wider curriculum. Inspectors also listened to several pupils read.
- Inspectors observed pupils at playtime and lunchtime and observed their behaviour and conduct around the school.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, subject leaders, the early years leader, the SEN coordinator and a group of teachers. Inspectors also met with groups of pupils, a group of governors, a representative of the local authority and the chief executive of the Tudhoe Learning Trust.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of documents, including the school's self-evaluation and improvement plans, policies, assessment information, performance management documents and support plans for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities. Inspectors looked at records of attendance, behaviour, minutes of governing body meetings and safeguarding information.
- Inspectors took account of the 46 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View. In addition, the inspectors took account of the six responses to Ofsted's staff survey.

Inspection team

Chris Smith, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Alexa O'Gara	Ofsted Inspector
Nicola Nelson-Taylor	Ofsted Inspector

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