

Inspection of a good school: Shotton Primary School

Grange Terrace, Shotton Colliery, County Durham DH6 2JP

Inspection dates: 29 and 30 March 2022

Outcome

Shotton Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are happy at school. There is a sense of fun in classes and outside. Pupils cannot remember any bullying happening in the recent past. Teachers deal quickly with any falling-out or occasional rough play. Pupils describe their teachers as kind and thoughtful. They know that they always have a friend or a teacher to talk to if there is a problem. Lunchtime staff encourage pupils to play together.

All members of staff expect the very best of pupils. Relationships between adults and pupils are strong and respectful. Pupils appreciate it when teachers say how proud they are of them. A cheery greeting between some pupils and the school caretaker reflects the positive environment that leaders have created.

Celebration assemblies reward pupils who display any of the school's 'magic powers'. These include motivation, gumption and positive attitudes. Pupils learn about acceptable behaviours out of school. These range from table manners to quiet, respectful behaviour around churches. Pupils understand the 'happiness tree' display that helps keep their emotional well-being intact. They know that positive relationships, self-confidence and good coping skills are key to success. Pupils learn how to look after themselves and keep themselves safe. This includes learning about water and road safety. They also learn basic first aid.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Leaders have identified gaps in pupils' learning due to the pandemic. These are being addressed through extra work in writing and basic number skills. Curriculum thinking in some curriculum subjects is clear. Leaders have ensured that these subjects are built around key ideas that link learning. Knowledge is broken down into small pieces that build on what pupils already know. In subjects such as art and design and mathematics, the knowledge pupils need to learn and remember is clear and well ordered. Subject leaders have pinpointed the key knowledge children must remember when leaving Reception. This means most pupils are ready for Year 1. Leaders are making sure that a consistent

structure for all subjects is in place for the few subjects where these strengths in curriculum thinking are not yet the case.

In most subjects, teachers deliver lessons that build pupils' understanding and knowledge step by step. Pupils learn the curriculum because teaching is not rushed. Teachers are skilled at making daily checks on what pupils understand. Teachers change lessons to help move pupils' learning forward. Extra support is provided for pupils who need help to keep up with their peers. This also includes pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) also plans additional support for some pupils. This includes individual adult support. In subjects such as geography and design and technology, assessment systems are not sharp enough. Checks on pupils' learning do not capture what pupils have remembered in the long term.

Leaders are focused on making sure younger pupils quickly learn to read. Daily phonics lessons start in Reception. Teachers deliver lessons using the same approach in each class. Regular training for all adults gives them the skills they need to teach phonics accurately. Pupils are given books to take home and practise their reading. These books are chosen so that pupils do not get stuck on words that are too hard. Pupils are quickly becoming fluent readers, using expression. Teachers work hard to find books all pupils will enjoy. Books read in story time, at the end of the day, are also chosen carefully to capture pupils' imagination.

Behaviour in phonics lessons is good. In Reception, children listen attentively and try their best. Teachers insist on 'hands up' to answer questions. In Nursery, children maturely sit together to sing songs and listen to stories. They have good concentration and follow instructions. Pupils say that behaviour in lessons is usually good. Any issues are quickly sorted out.

Leaders support pupils' all-round personal development well. Pupils' well-being, mental health, aspiration, appreciation of their local area and a deepening love of the arts are central to this. Leaders provide lots of opportunities to broaden pupils' horizons. These include residential trips, visits from theatre groups, charitable work, the Year 6 leavers' assembly in Durham Cathedral and producing a bicycle safety film.

Staff trust their leaders and appreciate their 'well-being days'. Staff can use anonymous surveys to raise issues. Most have the confidence to speak directly with leaders about any issue related to their role. Staff state that their workload is managed well by leaders. They feel assured that leaders want the very best for all staff in school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure that safeguarding training for every member of staff is up to date. This means adults are confident to raise even the slightest concern or worry about a pupil. Staff log these into the online record-keeping system. All staff are aware of potential safeguarding risks in the local area. Leaders use external partners well to ensure pupils' safety. Links to the police community support officers exemplify this. Teachers know the

whistle-blowing policy, should this ever be necessary. Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe out of school, including online.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some subjects, the curriculum is not well sequenced. The essential knowledge that leaders want pupils to know has not been clearly identified. As a result, pupils are unable to make the connections between their new learning and what they know already. The curriculum is not helping them to know and do more over time. The essential knowledge pupils need at the end of Reception in each subject, so they are ready to start Year 1, is unclear. Leaders need to ensure that in all subjects the curriculum is carefully planned so that pupils' learning builds on what they know already. It is clear from leaders' actions that they are in the process of bringing this about and so the transitional arrangements have been applied.
- Leaders' approach to assessing pupils' learning in the wider curriculum is not precise enough. It does not identify what pupils know and can do in subjects such as design and technology and history. Systematic checks are not made to discover if knowledge pupils should have acquired is transferred to their long-term memory. Teachers are unable to shape learning because what pupils know and remember is unclear. Leaders should ensure that they develop assessment systems across the curriculum so that pupils' knowledge and skills are accurately checked.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called a section 8 inspection of a good or outstanding school, because it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the section 8 inspection as a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the second section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good in March 2012.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

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.

School details

Unique reference number	114152
Local authority	Durham
Inspection number	10211426
Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	305
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Karen Hudson
Headteacher	Heather Shaw
Website	www.shottonprimary.durham.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	15 February 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school uses no alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and has taken that into account in his evaluation of the school.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, the SENCo, the attendance and safeguarding officer, teachers, teaching assistants and the school business manager. The inspector also met four members of the local governing body and the school leadership adviser from the local authority.
- Deep dives were carried out in reading, art and design and mathematics. For each deep dive, the inspector met with leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons where available, spoke to teachers and teaching assistants, spoke to some pupils and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The inspector listened to a range of pupils read from different year groups.

- The inspector also looked at curriculum plans and spoke to leaders about other curriculum subjects.
- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour during lesson visits and at lunchtime. He spoke to pupils about their views of behaviour, and a group of pupils gave the inspector a tour of the school.
- The inspector looked at the single central record of recruitment and vetting checks and spoke to leaders, teachers and pupils about safeguarding.
- The views of parents who responded to Ofsted's questionnaire, Ofsted Parent View, were considered. This included the written comments.
- The inspector met with staff to discuss their well-being and workload. He considered the responses from Ofsted's staff survey and the responses from Ofsted's pupil survey.

Inspection team

Phil Scott, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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