

Inspection of Shilbottle Primary School

Shilbottle Grange, Shilbottle, Alnwick, Northumberland NE66 2XQ

Inspection dates: 24 and 25 January 2023

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Early Years	Good
Previous inspection grade	Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

Shilbottle Primary is a small, inclusive village school. Pupils and staff are friendly and welcoming. Staff know the pupils and their families well. Relationships are exceptionally strong. Parents have a very positive view of the school. One parent stated, 'It's a fabulous school, which develops the whole child. My child is happy, supported and well cared for.' This view captures the opinions of many parents.

Leaders have faced many challenges due to staff reductions and a falling roll. Leaders know that the curriculum needs further development. However, their determination to achieve the vision of 'every child matters to us' remains. Leaders and staff are highly ambitious for all pupils.

Pupils are very proud of their school. They respond well to leaders' high expectations. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and disadvantaged pupils, achieve well, both socially and academically.

Pupils' behaviour is exemplary. Classrooms are calm and settled places. Pupils enjoy their learning and concentrate well in lessons. Pupils are considerate and well-mannered.

Staff and pupils enjoy positive relationships, which help to create a peaceful and nurturing environment. This helps pupils to feel safe and well supported. Pupils say their friends, and the staff, look after them well. Pupils know what constitutes bullying. They explain that if bullying did occur here, an adult would be there to sort things out.

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

Since the previous inspection, leaders have strengthened the quality of education. Leaders ensure that reading is prioritised across the school. From the beginning of Reception, children learn phonics. Staff develop pupils' early reading skills effectively. They model sounds accurately and sensitively address pupils' misunderstandings. Pupils confidently read books that match the sounds they have learned. Staff ensure that pupils who find reading more difficult receive extra help quickly so that they can keep up with their peers.

Once pupils are confident in applying their phonics knowledge, they are able to move on to read more complex texts. Staff inspire pupils to love reading. Teachers read to pupils every day. Pupils enjoy their regular visits to the well-resourced school library.

Staff teach mathematics effectively and pupils achieve well. Teachers use a range of resources to clearly illustrate mathematical concepts. This helps pupils to grasp new learning securely. Staff make regular checks on pupils' understanding. Pupils are given frequent opportunities to revisit and consolidate key mathematical knowledge.

Pupils confidently discuss their mathematical ideas with each other and their teachers.

Leaders have created a broad and balanced curriculum, which is enhanced with a variety of experiences and visits. Leaders continue to make improvements to the curriculum. They are in the process of adapting the curriculum to cater for mixed-age year groups. In some subjects, curriculum thinking is still at an early stage. Leaders have not considered carefully enough what they want pupils to learn. The small steps pupils need to take in their learning are not consistently clear. At times, leaders have not thought carefully enough about how precise skills and knowledge will build progressively from the early years through to the end of key stage 2.

The early years curriculum is ambitious and well structured. Children enjoy their learning in a supportive and stimulating environment. The early years environment is well resourced. It captures the children's interests and develops their curiosity. The early years staff provide children with a solid foundation, so they are well prepared for their learning in key stage 1.

Leaders are determined that pupils with SEND will achieve just as well as their peers. Staff identify the needs of pupils with SEND swiftly. Leaders carefully check that the right support is in place to help these pupils to thrive. Staff understand how to adapt the delivery of the curriculum to ensure that pupils with SEND achieve well.

Pupils' personal development is strong. Staff help pupils to develop into respectful and responsible citizens who are well prepared for life in modern Britain. The schools personal, social and health education (PSHE) curriculum broadens pupils' understanding of the world beyond their community. Pupils have a respectful understanding of difference. They told the inspectors that everyone should be treated fairly and equally. Enrichment activities, such as residential trips, help pupils to grow in confidence. Pupils develop new interests through the varied after-school activities, such as rugby, gardening and computer coding clubs. Pupils make a positive contribution to their school community by becoming school councillors and play leaders.

Governors are passionate about their roles. They help to improve the school. Governors visit the school frequently and are well informed. They bring a wide range of knowledge and experience to their roles. Governors skilfully provide challenge and support to school leaders.

Leaders have created a school where staff are happy and feel valued. Due to the size of the school, staff have to take on many roles and responsibilities. Leaders are considerate of this. They ensure that sufficient time is allocated to support workload. Staff are proud to work in the school. They feel valued and appreciated.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders are proactive in their approach to safeguarding. Staff have regular training and are aware of their responsibilities. They know that 'it could happen here'. Staff understand what to do if they have any concerns about a pupil.

Staff know children and families very well. They are vigilant to changes in behaviour. Leaders work well with a range of external agencies to ensure that vulnerable pupils and their families receive the help and support that they need, in a timely manner.

Pupils understand how to keep themselves safe online and within the locality. They know what to do if they have a concern about any aspect of their safety or well-being.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some foundation subjects are not sufficiently well developed. The skills and knowledge that pupils need to know and remember are not precisely identified. As a result, teachers are unclear about exactly what pupils need to learn. Leaders must ensure that in all subjects, curriculum thinking clearly identifies precisely what pupils need to learn across each year group. This will help pupils to know and remember more over time.

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.

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	122238
Local authority	Northumberland
Inspection number	10257060
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	86
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Emma Bryceland
Headteacher	Gary Parnaby
Website	www.shilbottle.northumberland.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	5 November 2020, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school does not use any alternative provision.
- There is an on-site breakfast and after-school club managed by the school.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors did deep dives in the following subjects: early reading, mathematics, design technology and geography. For each deep dive, the inspector discussed the curriculum with leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons where available and met with teachers from the lessons visited. Inspectors also looked at pupils' work and spoke to pupils.
- Inspectors listened to a range of pupils read from different year groups.

- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour during lesson visits, at break-time and at lunchtime. They spoke to pupils about their views of behaviour.
- The inspector checked the single central register of recruitment and vetting checks.
- The inspectors spoke to leaders, teachers, governors and pupils about safeguarding.
- Inspectors spoke with parents and also considered the responses made by parents to Ofsted Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire. Inspectors also considered the responses to Ofsted's online staff questionnaire and responses to Ofsted's pupil survey.

Inspection team

Alison Stephenson, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Cathy Lee	Ofsted Inspector

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